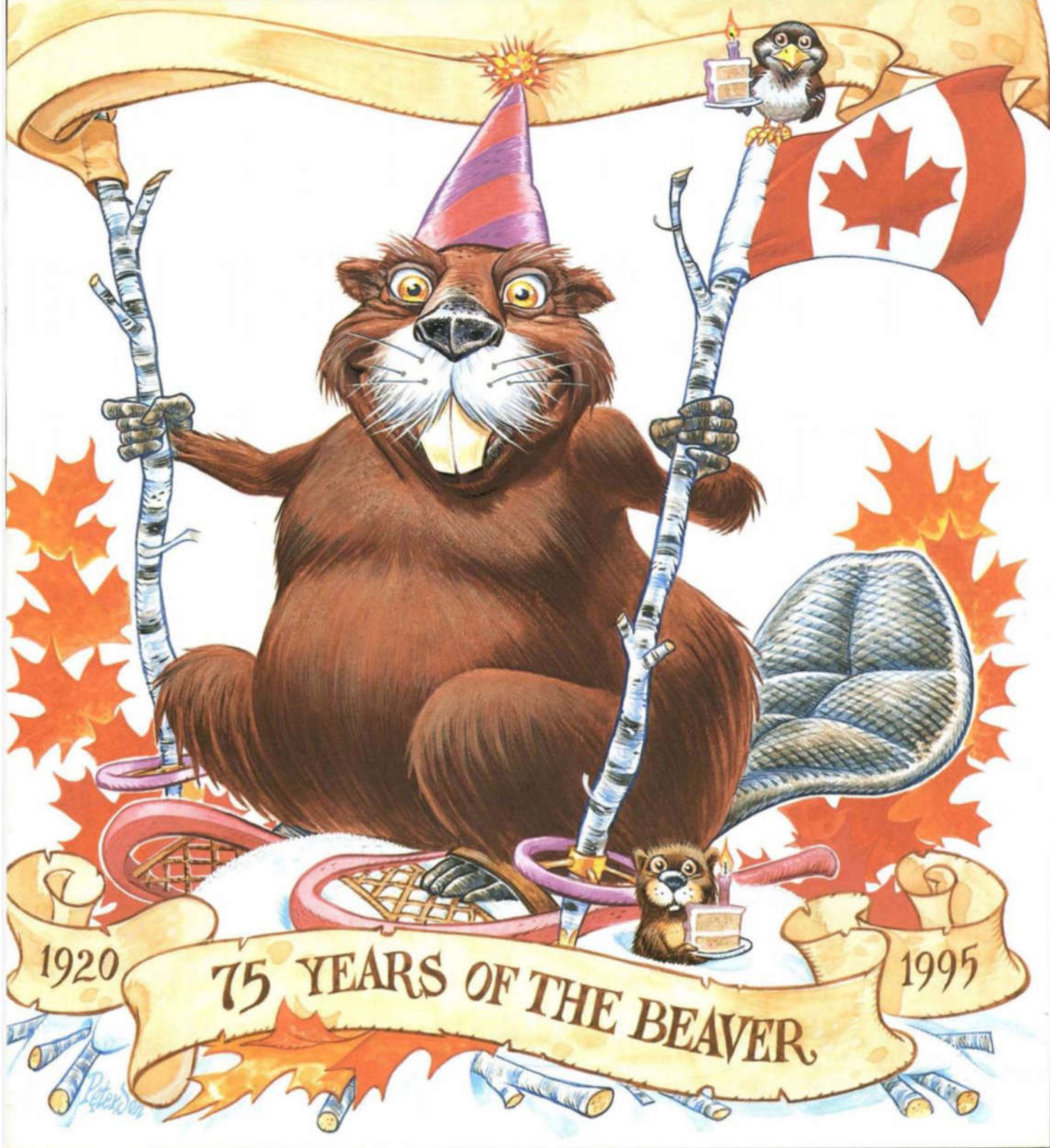


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The Beaver

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Canada's 20th Century

To celebrate the beginning of its 75th anniversary year, *The Beaver* looks back on the great cavalcade of Canada's Century. Five distinguished Canadian historians examine various aspects of the Canadian experience in this special, expanded issue. This extraordinary number features P.B. Waite on politics, J.L. Granatstein on war, Veronica Strong-Boag on women, J.M. Bumsted on society and culture and Michael Bliss on business. Join *The Beaver's* anniversary celebrations throughout 1995.

The Beaver, December/January

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THE BEAVER: Exploring Canada's History (ISSN 0005-7517), founded in 1920 by the Hudson's Bay Company, is published bi-monthly by Canada's National History Society, 450 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3C 0E7. Phone: (204) 786-7048. Fax: (204) 774-8624

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION: (6 issues) \$25.00.
(Canada and United States) SINGLE COPY \$4.50.
OTHER COUNTRIES ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION \$32.00.

Manitoba Residents: Add 7% PST (\$1.64 on 1-year subscription; \$2.94 on 2-year; \$3.93 on 3-year).

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES: Call Toll Free 1-800-816-6777.

CANADIAN POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE BEAVER Magazine, 450 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0E7.

PUBLICATIONS MAIL REGISTRATION NO. 1401.

U.S. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE BEAVER Magazine, c/o H.A. & J.L. Wood, Inc., Box 329, Pembina, North Dakota 58271-0329.

U.S. SECOND-CLASS MAIL REGISTRATION NUMBER: USPS 759-610.

Second class postage paid at Winnipeg and at Pembina, North Dakota.

While every care will be taken of manuscripts and illustrations submitted, no liability will be assumed for loss.

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GST Registration Number: R 138681408.

Issued November 1994

PRINTED IN CANADA



December 1994/January 1995

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A Beaver Celebration

By Roy Peterson



Early Days at *The Beaver*

The name of the magazine should convey instant suggestion of Company traditions or present associations and should be broad enough to cover all departments. Among names which first occur to one are: *The Beaver*, *Hudson's Bay Blanket*, *HBC Journal*, *The Canadian Trader*".

Clifton M. Thomas, Publicity Agent of the Hudson's Bay Company, was writing to a Company official in Winnipeg regarding the establishment of a new magazine. The letter was dated 16 July 1920. In that year the "Company of Adventurers" was celebrating the 250th anniversary of the granting of its charter by Charles II

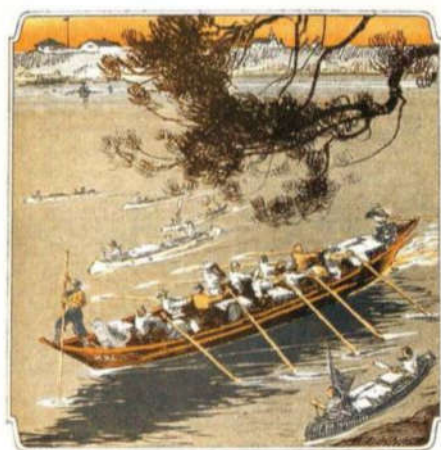
published monthly starting in October 1920 and it would cater to the needs and interests of Hudson's Bay Company employees. It was, in fact, to be a "house organ", one of many founded in the years after the First World War as what has been called "The Age of Publicity" began. On 7 September a Company official approved an expenditure of \$570.00 and work began on the first issue of *The Beaver*.

That first issue, featuring a portrait of the governor, Sir Robert Molesworth Kindersley, on the cover, came off the press in October, featuring accounts of the anniversary celebrations, items on retirements, marriages and births and pictures of employees at play. An editorial hailed the governor as a "self-made man", gave him full credit for the idea of publishing a staff magazine and went on to pay tribute to "his gentle wife and fine children". Mr. Thomas clearly hoped to stay on as editor. The issue also made a nod to HBC history, although the past journal excerpts were presented in a way that suggested that Mr. Thomas had only a vague knowledge of Canadian geography.

Charles V. Sale, the deputy governor, took an immediate interest in the new magazine. Writing from London headquarters at the end of December 1920, he had a few tips for the editor: "I have read the two first issues with interest but it seems to me that the editor confines himself too much to matters of purely personal and domestic character. I think he fails to see the much wider sphere which the journal of such a Company as ours should strive to occupy, not only in its relation to the Staff but to the general public". The deputy governor then drew the attention of the editor to a magazine called *The Valve World*, published by the Crane Company of America, which cleverly combined items of interest to the staff, subtle advertising for the firm's bathroom fixtures and educational material for the general public. "I only want to feel assured," the deputy governor added, "that we are aiming in the right direction and with a full realization of the standard to be attained. 'Hitch your wagon to a star' is, I think, the American definition".

"Caution", however, was the watchword at Canadian headquarters in Winnipeg. To hitch *The Beaver's* wagon to deputy governor Sale's star would, it was felt, make it necessary to increase circulation from a modest 4,000 copies "to somewhere between 50,000 and 100,000 copies per month". Printing fees and payments to well-known writers could increase the cost of publication to a staggering \$8,000 per month. In September

Vol. I JULY, 1921 No. 16



AN H.B.C. FUR BRIGADE



and the old firm, unused to blowing its own horn, had hired Mr. Thomas, an American, to help orchestrate the celebrations.

In a letter dated 3 September 1920, Mr. Thomas confirmed that the Company had decided not to call its new magazine "Hudson's Bay Blanket", in spite of the cosy associations such a name might inspire in potential readers. A competition had been held and a Mr. B.A. Everett of the HBC Land Department in Winnipeg was the winner. The magazine would be called *The Beaver: A Journal of Progress*, it would be

1921, a brief letter from the Governor and Committee at Lime Street, London, conceded that it might be best, after all, to continue the magazine in a modest way. In any case, the editorship of C.M. Thomas was drawing to a close.

In November 1923 Robert Watson, a writer and former accountant at the Saskatoon store, took over as editor and with the December 1924 issue *The Beaver* became a quarterly.

As the years went by, history became an increasingly important part of the magazine. In a memo written in October 1931, Robert Watson stressed the need for articles of an historical nature: "*The Beaver* requires a steady flow of interesting articles from 600 to 1,500 words ... written in an attractive manner with an HBC slant — post incidents from early journals, records of noted HBC officers, HBC ships, HBC posts, unusual journeys, and experiences; fresh light on well-known HBC characters, and information regarding little-known early officers ... Any journals that have come into my hands, such as that of Robert Campbell, Donald Ross, Samuel Black, have afforded me a mine of material for articles, and almost every journal in the London Archives must have some story hidden away in it that would be of interest to our staff and our general readers."

As the decade wore on, the battle continued between those who saw *The Beaver* as a kind of "staff newsletter" and those who felt that the Hudson's Bay Company had a much larger story to tell concerning its long association with the history of Canada. In December 1931 Watson was writing to a staff correspondent in Calgary to respond to charges that the magazine contained too much material about the fur trade. The emphasis on the fur trade and the North, Watson wrote, "is attributable to two conditions, namely — that the romance of the Fur Trade lends itself so much to interesting material, and further — that Fur Trade men and the people interested in the Fur Trade seem to contribute so much more material of a special nature."

It was true. More and more, Canadians were recognizing the importance of the fur trade in the history of the country. With time, increasing numbers of Canadian historians would specialize in the fur trade era. At the same time, many Northern traders were becoming aware that they were a part of a great historic tradition and HBC men such as Paddy Gibson and Lorenzo Learmonth would become rather expert themselves in various aspects of Northern history. They, and others like them, wrote for *The Beaver* and, year by year, the magazine's reputation grew. The journal, founded as a "house organ" with modest ambitions, was evolving into something unique and valuable.

In February 1933 the editorship changed hands again. Robert Watson departed to pursue a writing

career and Douglas MacKay became Public Relations Counsel and Editor of *The Beaver*.

MacKay acted immediately to hive off the "house organ" aspects of the magazine and put the journal on a new footing. He soon obtained the blessing of head office to create a new sort of magazine. His request for a new title, however, was denied. The revised "Magazine of the North" would be called *The Beaver*. In a memorandum dated 23 June 1933 MacKay outlined his plans for the magazine: "It will give special attention to the north country in all its activities,

The Beaver

A MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH



OUTFIT 266
NUMBER 3

The New World's Oldest
Industry
—George G. Whitney

Indian Portraits
—Prof. Dr. Henry Hallowell

Two Documents from
Radisson's Suit
—Glen Ross Hume
Interim: History of Toronto

The Killing of the
Buffalo
—Henry Barns Hallowell

The Rupert River Brigade
—J. W. Anderson

Lower Fort Garry

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY
Hudson's Bay Company

December 1935

emphasizing the association of Hudson's Bay Company with that country. It will also examine the Company as a whole and wherever there is matter of dramatic interest, it will endeavour to tell its story and in pictures. The magazine will undertake to secure the best possible photography and in the modern manner. It is hoped that the appearance and text of the magazine will be so effective that it will compel examination by anyone who receives it and that it will reflect credit upon its publishers, the Hudson's Bay Company."

He was as good as his word. *The Beaver* was admired for its literary standards and it attracted such photographers as Lorene Squire and Nicholas Morant.

MacKay's editorship would be sadly brief. He died in January 1938 when the aircraft on which he was returning from a Company assignment on the West Coast crashed, but the path he charted would carry *The Beaver* far, creating a large international readership and an enduring reputation for excellence. ♦

Nineteenth-century Canada had often appeared to be an empty, dreary sort of place, full of rocks and trees and tumbling waters. Its people huddled in port towns, farmed patches of arable land near the U.S. border, and hauled down pine trees in the winter. Some aboriginals clung to traditional ways of life; others, trying to adapt, slid into white man's poverty on their reserves.

Yes, the Canadians built railways on an epic scale. But the unhappy little secret about the Canadian Pacific Railway was that it didn't live up to expectations. They drove the last spike in 1885 and nothing happened. Immigrants did not come, the wilderness did not bloom, Winnipeg stagnated, the CPR company could not pay regular dividends. In the hard times of the 80s and 90s enterprising young Canadians left for the "Boston states", Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, California. The "Canadian question", as Goldwin Smith defined it in 1891, was whether the whole country would give up

could look forward to prosperity and progress in the bright dawn of the new century.

No wonder Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier said the twentieth century would belong to Canada. The continent's frigid attic was opening up to reveal cornucopia, a treasure house, a new Eldorado, the last frontier. Huge waves of immigration began breaking over the land. Railwaymen drove steel roads everywhere — through northern forests and mountains, up and down the prairies, heading for Hudson Bay, the Arctic Circle, the Yukon. Heading right down Main Street with steel rails and electrical wires and telephone wires and sewers and gas mains — for the cities were growing even faster than the countryside.

Manufacturers were pouring molten steel, the symbol of the industrial age, in factories on the edge of the northern forest at Sault Ste. Marie and on the shores of the North Atlantic at Sydney. Bankers weighed gold dust in tents under the northern lights at Dawson. A

Economic Life in the 20th Century

NORTHERN WEALTH

By Michael Bliss

the dream of Confederation and become a few more states in a continental Union.

But towards the end of the century, everything started to work in Canada's favour. As the old textbooks say, Canada's hour had struck. Prospectors discovered that the rocks and the riverbeds were full of gold, silver, base metals — in the Kootenay, the Klondike, Cobalt, Sudbury, Porcupine. Technology made it possible to grind the small spruces of the northern forests into pulp, acidify the mess, and make paper. Canada's limitless supply of rushing, falling water, symbolized by that horrible obstruction to navigation, Niagara Falls, could be turned into "white coal", hydro-electric power.

With steel ploughs you could turn the heavy prairie sod, and, yes, the wilderness would bring forth fruit, unto an hundredfold. Sodbusters in the West, habitants in Quebec, farmers in P.E.I. and Ontario, could sell their grain and cheese, and butter and bacon at good prices on booming European and American markets. Everyone

governor-general, Lord Grey, envisaged Hudson Bay, which he saw in the summertime, as "the Mediterranean of Canada". Once a thin red line above the American republic, young Canada was becoming thick with activity, building girth and muscle. Its population increased by almost 40 percent between 1901 and 1911, from five to seven million. Laurier, and many others, thought Canada would have sixty million people by the end of the century.

The *Canadian Courier*, the country's first news-magazine, summed up the optimism of the new era in 1909:

... hundreds and thousands of Canadian boys can hope to trip over a fortune one of these days in the Canadian wilderness. Pots of gold lie hidden there more truly than at the end of rainbows. ... Canada is a perpetual Christmas Tree with a present for every son of the house.

... We are adventurers living the thrilling life of

A Christmas Tree Country



Metro Toronto Public Library

ROBERT F. GAGEN
Temples of Commerce 1914.
Toronto from the harbour.



discovery, of daring, of chance and of conquest. Barefooted boys become millionaires and live in palaces. In the knapsack of every Canadian schoolboy there is — not a marshal's baton — but a millionaire's bank book.

The women still tended to stay home and work. No one denied that everyday life for most Canadians of both sexes was gruelingly hard. Most work was physical, dreary, and apparently endless. Dawn to dusk on the farm, nine or ten hours in factories or shops, six days a week, maybe a half-day off for picnicking in the summers.

Not much in the way of social safety-nets or trade unions to protect the disadvantaged. Still a society where people were on their own to sink or swim, but-tressed a bit, if they were lucky, by family, church, or fraternal society. We hear most about the swimmers. The losers, the failures, the drowned and despondent, drift quietly out of our ken. The failure rate among Western homesteaders was about 40 percent. Most of the aboriginal people seemed to fall in the losing camp — seen as dying peoples, doomed races, selling baskets at CPR stations, winning a few dollars at footraces, telling their stories to collectors of ethnological folklore sent out by the big museums and universities.

The "Big Men" of Canada (mostly businessmen, not politicians, according to a magazine survey) were getting on with organizing the commerce of a nation. More than that, they were becoming builders and brokers and purveyors to the whole world. The sun never set on Massey-Harris farm implements or Canadian Life insurance salesmen, found everywhere from the steppes of Russia to the clubs of Hong Kong. Toronto was hog-butcher to the Empire, "Hogtown", thanks to the huge William Davies pork-packing operation. The big Canadian banks, the Montreal, the Commerce, the Royal, backed cotton traders in New Orleans, gold dealers in New York, sugar brokers in Havana, bond dealers in London, Montreal, and Toronto. Canadians were building street railways and electrical plants in Sao Paulo, Rio, Mexico City, Barcelona, Cuba, Guatemala, and half a dozen West Indian Islands. Hustling Max Aitken from Newcastle, New Brunswick, was buying and selling securities, merging and promoting, soon to go off to England to become Lord Beaverbrook.

There were no significant income or corporation taxes at the beginning of the twentieth century. The government of Canada spent a grand total of \$55.5 million in 1900, most of it collected from tariffs on imports. Poor people lived in tarpaper shacks in the northern bush, sod huts on the prairies, ramshackle boarding houses and tenements in the cities. Some millionaires flaunted their wealth in the very names of their homes — Castle Frank, Dundurn Castle, Craigdarroch Castle, and, the most tacky and visible of all, Henry Mill Pellatt's Casa Loma in Toronto. The deputy-minister of Labour in the Laurier government, William Lyon Mackenzie King, made his reputation mediating bitter industrial disputes between tough bosses and workers demanding a better lot in life.

But when the Laurier government negotiated a reciprocity agreement with the United States and went to the people in the 1911 election arguing that freer trade would help better most Canadians' lot in life, it was soundly defeated. Canada was doing just fine without free trade, the businessmen and the Tories argued. Since 1879 the country's "National Policy" was protective tariffs, to save the domestic market for Canadian manufacturers. Imperial preferential tariffs slightly modified the system, and tied Canada nicely into the British family. If present growth rates continued, Canada would someday become the most important country in the British Empire. Why tamper with a good thing?

The End of Innocence and Empire

Don't believe the silly notion that wars were healthy for Canada. Was it good for the country to take 600,000 men, in the prime of their lives, out of the work force between 1914-1918, and pay them \$1.10 a day to live and fight in the squalor of Flanders trenches? Was it

good for Canadian industry to become manufacturers of shells, fuzes, high explosives, military aircraft — turning the country's raw wealth into instruments of destruction and death?

Yes, exports to war-torn Europe soared, and the country's GNP increased. Yes, the Laurier boom had crashed before the guns went off, and the recruiting drives were a way of sopping up the unemployed. By 1916 every able-bodied Canadian man could find work on farms and in munitions factories — and a few months later able-bodied women were being hired to do what had always been thought to be man's work. Yes, some businessmen made big profits on war work, and many war workers got all the overtime they could take at high wages, and farm products sold at prices that seemed incredible.

money supply in a time of soaring demand, leading to the most serious inflation in Canadian history. Prices doubled between 1915 and 1920. Many wages lagged. The combination of inflation, a tight labour market, and war-induced egalitarianism, led to unprecedented labour organizing and unrest. Union membership increased by 50 percent in 1919, only to crash downwards after radical labour leaders over-reached themselves in reckless strikes. The Winnipeg General Strike, the equivalent of a resort to nuclear weapons in war, was broken by the state and was in every way a dismal failure.

The costs of reckless expansion in Edwardian Canada became a deadweight on postwar Canada. The railway network was wildly overbuilt. The sprawling Canadian National Railway system, born after the Great War, was a picking up of the bankrupt lines



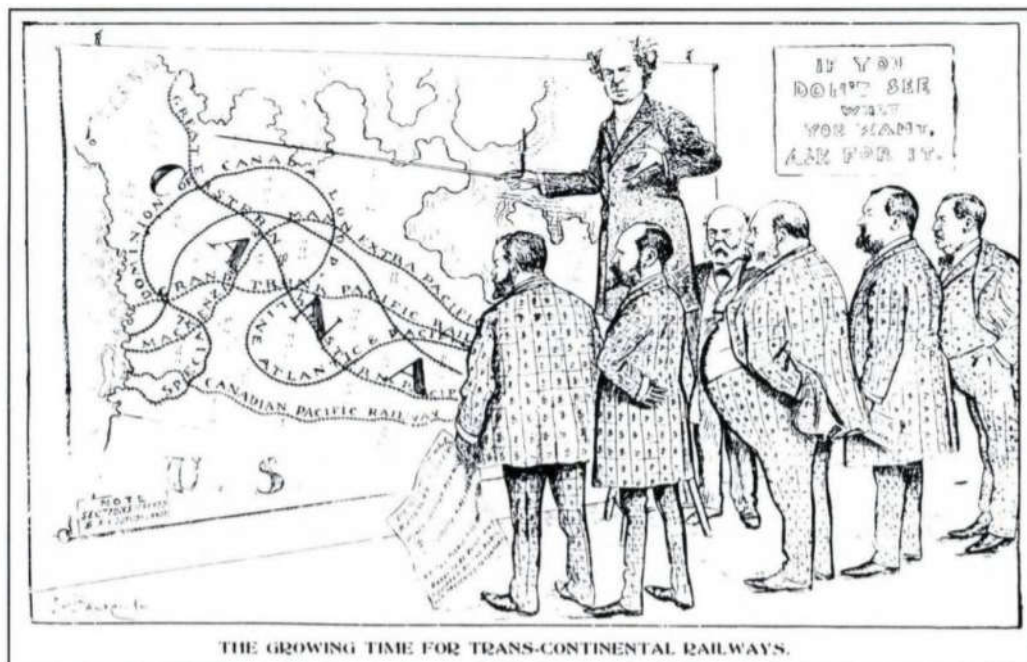
*Vancouver harbour from the roof garden of the old Hotel Vancouver, 1918.
From a painting by Charles W. Simpson.*

These were real benefits for some, but they must be weighed against the costs the soldiers bore, especially the 60,000 who never came home. "This war is the suicide of civilization" Prime Minister R.L. Borden wrote in his diary in 1915.

Some of the war's material costs were paid after the shooting stopped. There were heavy war debts and "temporary" taxes on income and corporations that would never go away. Ottawa had failed to control the

whose bonds had been guaranteed by foolish governments. The CNR seldom paid its operating costs; Canadian taxpayers paid its debts.

The 1920s did not roar in Canada. Like a punctured balloon, they deflated. Prices crashed in the depression of 1921-22. Burdens of debt and taxes became more onerous. Farmers started abandoning arid land on the southern Prairies and redoubled their involvement in politics. Unemployment became a problem in Alberta



Laurier's railway expansion turned sour in the postwar years.

and Saskatchewan cities; Winnipeg, a gateway without immigrants to come through it, stagnated. The old lumbering families of the Ottawa Valley had few limbs of virgin pine left to cling to, and toppled one by one, bringing down several banks with them. The electricity and street-railway magnates sold out or were expropriated by power-hungry politicians, taking huge losses. Sir Henry Pellatt boarded up his castle in Toronto and auctioned off the contents.

The decade's truly serious labour unrest was in the steel and coal towns of Nova Scotia, where a ramshackle conglomerate, the grandiosely named British

Empire Steel Company, tried to cling to survival by slashing wages to the bone, and the workers fought back desperately. Come to think of it, part of Canada's troubles stemmed from the near-bankruptcy of the British Empire itself. The revered Mother Country was weakened and obviously in decline. Economically as well as politically, the young Dominions, including Canada, were going to have to fend for themselves.

The rich and powerful United States, whose participation in the war had been late and relatively little, had a much easier transition to "normalcy". Its prosperity in the early 1920s, compared to Canada was striking. So the greatest movement of peoples in Canada was not of more immigrants to the prairies — which were now pretty well full — but of Canadians heading south — not just the Mary Pickfords and Louis B. Mayers and Aimee Semple McPhersons going off to glory in California, but workers to car factories in Michigan, doctors and nurses to U.S. hospitals and small towns, professors to jobs in American universities.

When the Americans tried to close the border to booze, during their prohibition era, Canadians helped pour it in anyway. It was perfectly legal to sell the stuff in Canada for export. While some of the old brewing and distilling families had their qualms about the tough customers they dealt with, scrambling entrepreneurs like the Bronfman family and Harry Hatch (who bought Hiram Walker's) were delighted at the opportunity to come into the Canadian liquor magnates' club.

The north-south linkages, along with the country's resource base, and the new technologies, proved

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*Income tax, thought to be a temporary measure, came to stay.
By 1921 the experts were offering assistance.*

Canada's salvation in the 1920s. The Americans may have been newsmakers to the world, but the feats of Babe Ruth, Jack Dempsey, and Al Capone were published on Canadian newsprint. American automobiles used Canadian asbestos in their brakes and nickel steel in their bodies. The big mining firms, Inco, Cominco, Noranda, sold most of their ore, and a lot of their stock, to Americans. In 1923 the United States replaced Britain as the largest source of foreign investment capital for northern ventures; three years later it became Canada's most important trading partner.

Hard Times

As Canadians threw off their last colonial ties, they increasingly thought of themselves as a North American nation. The far western province, Canada's most prosperous in the 1920s, was British in name and culture, but looked to Asia and the U.S. Pacific coast for its economic destiny. New communications industries, like radio broadcasting, hardly paid attention to borders. In the 1920s American radio stations reached more Canadians than Canadian radio stations did. The movies had only one capital city, Hollywood. The small Canadian stock markets vibrated to the big ticker from the south, rattling with news of the big board down on Wall Street.

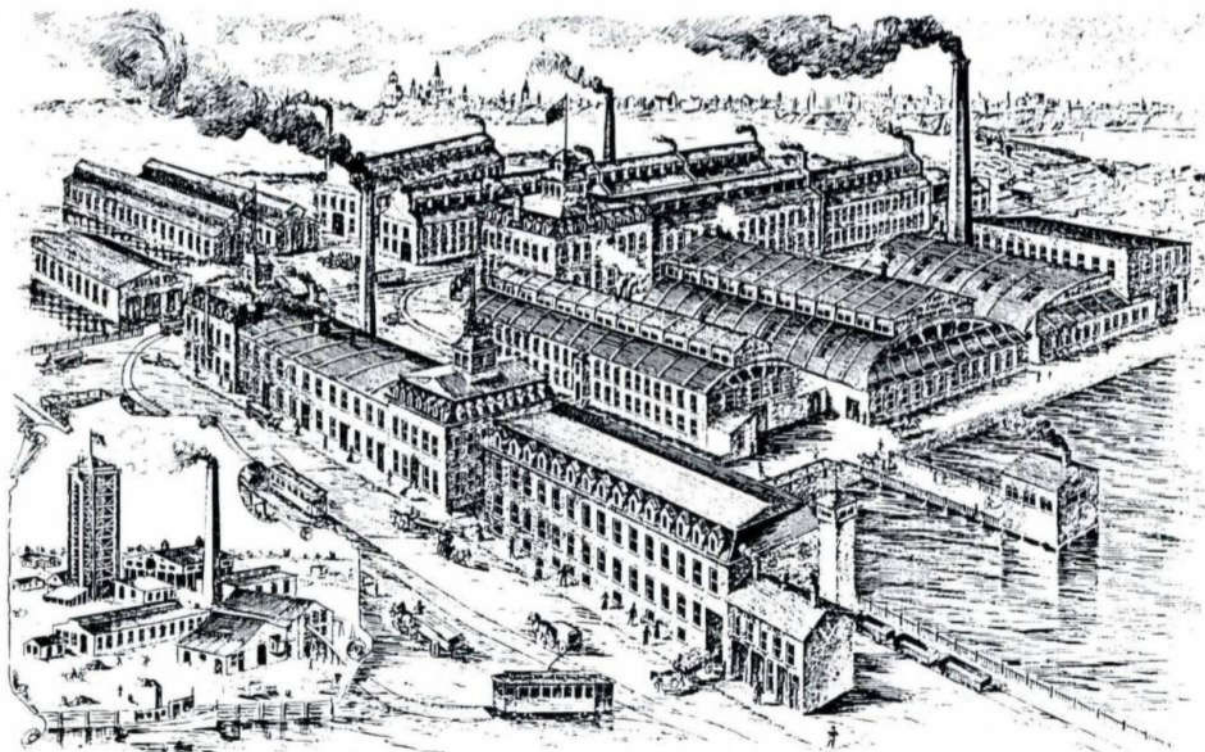
The stock market crash of 1929 was a catalyst, not the crack-up itself. That came gradually and later, as prices

fell, world markets were glutted, trade and employment fell off. The worst years were 1931-33, and most countries had recovered by 1939.

The Great Depression of the 1930s was a global phenomenon, a long-term readjustment after the Great War which was delayed and then made worse by erratic U.S. monetary policy. Most countries resorted to policies of economic nationalism — higher tariffs and manipulated currencies — to try to protect themselves from the downturn, and that made it worse. The weather turned sour in keeping with the times.

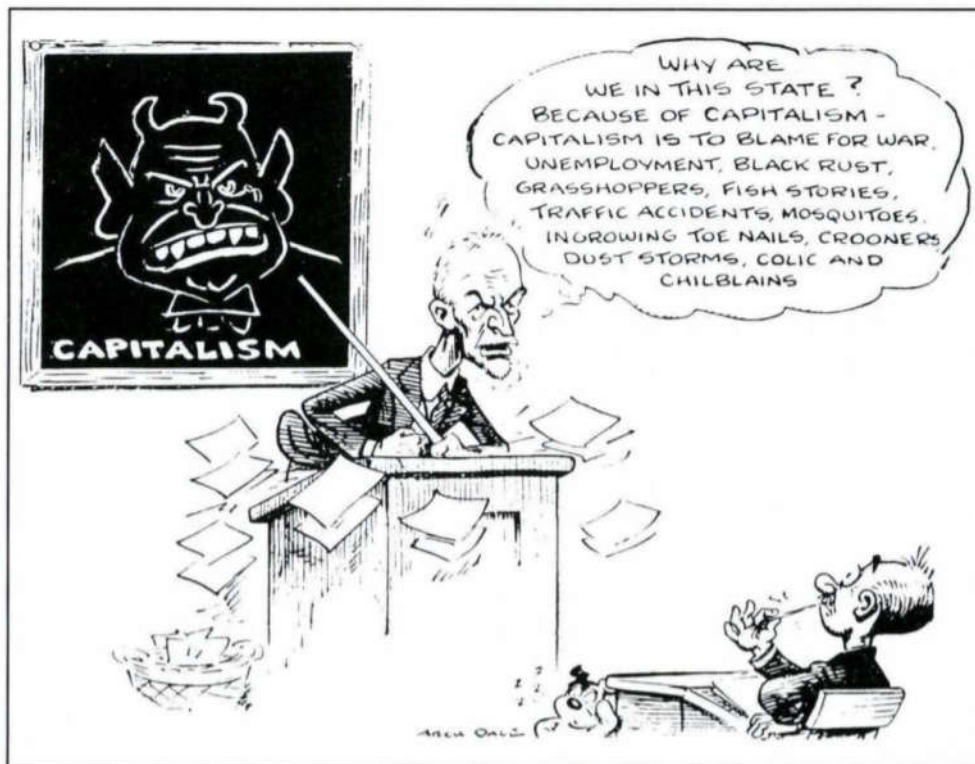
As one of the world's largest trading countries, Canada was badly hit by the depression, the value of its exports more than halved in four years. The price of wheat almost said it all: the 38 cents a bushel farmers got for Number One Northern in Winnipeg in December 1932 was the lowest price in 40 years. Unemployment rose as high as 25 percent of a labour force that still included relatively few women.

But we must not exaggerate. Nationally, the hardship of the 1930s was relative, not absolute. In terms of per capita income, Canada regressed to the levels of about 1907, which everyone thought of as a boom year. Crime did not increase significantly during the 1930s, nor did health decline. In fact infant mortality improved spectacularly during the decade thanks to the impact of public health measures and sulfa drugs. No Canadian



THE SULPHUR MILL.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE EDDY WORKS, HULL, CANADA.



Winnipeg Free Press

Socialist J.S. Woodsworth was thought by many to be the conscience of the nation in the 1930s. Here he lectures "the little man and his dog" in an Arch Dale cartoon of the period.

stock broker dove out of any window higher than the first floor. Three-quarters to nine-tenths of the work force kept their jobs. If you had to drive a Bennett-buggy, a horse harnessed to the shell of a car, you went a little slower, the way you had back before life had speeded up so much. Will Rogers quipped that Americans were the first people heading for the poor house in automobiles.

The incidence of hard times was very uneven. Many aboriginal Canadians, whose reserves were still geared to a subsistence economy, hardly noticed that anything had changed. Canadians who would be in trouble in the best of times, the old, the sick, children in very large families — now suffered the most, some going hungry and barefoot — no millionaire's bankbooks in their knapsacks — their health breaking down completely. Western farmers and Newfoundland fishermen were the most savagely devastated occupational groups. Homeless unemployed men rode the rails and were given the "bum's rush" out of town to prevent them from becoming a burden to local relief rolls. Single women were expected to give up their jobs or share them with male breadwinners. Young people found the labour market almost impossible to break into. Some of the rich who were living on investments found their incomes cut to zero: one impoverished member of the Molson family shot himself. A former president of the

Montreal Stock Exchange tried to murder Sir Herbert Holt, one of the country's richest investors. Out of work former bootleggers tried to kidnap an heir to the Labatt beer fortune.

It was worse in other jurisdictions. Out in the north Atlantic, the independent Dominion of Newfoundland became so over-extended that it defaulted on its debt charges and surrendered its self-government back to Britain. The Dominion of Canada, on the other hand, had been prudently governed in the good years of the 1920s, and had the resources to bail out its bankrupt Western provinces. Its financial system was also sound: no Canadian bank failed during the depression; no life insurance policyholders lost any money.

At times it was a near thing. When the British pound collapsed in 1931 the Canadian dollar lost 9 cents against the U.S. dollar in two days. Stock exchanges were banned from making trades at lower prices. Behind closed doors in Ottawa governments and financiers pledged mutual emergency support in documents that have yet to come to light. In the autumn of 1931 some financiers feared that the Government of Canada would not be able to service its debt. Ottawa had to float an emergency "National Service Loan," appealing to the people as though the country was at war.

Was there a sad failure of Canadian governments to wrestle the depression to the ground? Not really. Unlike

the United States, Canada was so thoroughly enmeshed in the global trading system that no amount of domestic tinkering would have made much of a difference. A social safety net, like Britain's or even the U.S. Social Security system, would have helped those who had fallen the farthest. Except for old age pensions for the indigent, it did not yet exist in Canada, and the complexities of the federal system guaranteed slow, difficult implementation. As for prosperity, that would only return when the world was again willing to pay good prices for Canadian wheat, wood, fish, and minerals. The high price of gold after 1933 did in fact cause a boom in mining towns across the North.

And most Canadians still rode in their cars, so chains of stores like Canadian Tire had a good decade, as did car and gas salesmen like New Brunswick's K.C. Irving. Canadians were addicted to radios, and bought them from men like Toronto's Roy Thomson. They bought beer from the breweries that young E.P. Taylor was reorganizing, and they filled Maple Leaf Gardens, Con Smythe's folly, whose workers had sometimes paid in stock certificates that eventually turned to gold. Across the country in the 1930s even the destitute and the unemployed could find a nickel to get into the movies, or a radio to huddle around on Saturday nights to catch "Hockey Night in Canada," free of charge.

The Pay-Off

Canada's contribution to the defeat of fascism in the Second World War was magnificent. The country's human and natural resources were mobilized as never before and sent into desperate, successful battle. The victory was stunningly complete and we now see that its economic consequences lingered for many years.

In 1945 Japan, the USSR, Germany, and much of the rest of Europe lay in ruins. The age of imperial Britain, of all the old colonial empires had passed. North America was the world's bastion of prosperity, its industries intact, its people's energies and know-how unrestrained by defeat or the backwards economics of Communism. For the next quarter century and more, the two rich North American countries were able to offer their citizens hitherto unimaginable prosperity and security, a golden, easy age of postwar affluence.

The human price of victory was another 40,000 dead Canadians, and many thousands more who had sacrificed health and happiness in the prime of their lives. No, this war was not good for Canada either.

Even the civilians on the home front scraped and saved so that all possible resources could be devoted to the war effort. True, everyone had jobs by 1941 or so, and that seemed a spectacular improvement on the dirty thirties. But taxes and forced savings tapped much of your income, and the supply of many consumer goods was severely rationed, or stopped altogether. In the 30s you couldn't afford a new car. In the early 40s you

couldn't buy one, or any new tires for the old one either, because manufacturers weren't making any. You did without. Extract all the guns and bombs and troop carriers and airplanes from the Canadian war economy, and we find that civilians' standards of living stayed close to depression levels. War was a grim business, under tight wage and price controls. And this time the government was careful to make sure that no one got rich out of it, which was only fair.

People who went barefoot anticipated better in Edwardian Canada, and barefoot from necessity in depression Canada, could finally afford good shoes in postwar Canada. A consumer's paradise, a Christmas tree laden with presents, revealed itself in rich North America. The shops and the sprawling new "shopping centres" were full of shoes and socks and nylon stockings — and "sanforized" clothes that did not shrink, and radios and television sets and frozen foods and baseball gloves and 78, then 45, then 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. records. The kids played rock and roll music on hi fi in the rec rooms of the housing developments in sprawling new suburbs. New cars with chrome bumpers and chrome trim and tail fins and V-8 and "Rocket 88" engines and sometimes even automatic transmissions sat in the carports.

The pop sociologists and austere economists like Canadian-born John Kenneth Galbraith (who coined a phrase with his 1958 book, *The Affluent Society*) viewed many of these developments with alarm, but the people seemed to revel in them. Jobs were secure and pay was high. The work week shrank and vacations got longer. Employers offered pension plans, some helped buy hospital and medical insurance. In the good times after the war Canadians had more children than ever before, a baby "boom" they called it, the coming to fruition of their own, their parents', their grandparents' aspirations.

Governments promised that depression hardships and inequalities would not recur. They thought it was possible to control the business cycle through the "contracyclical" spending and lending policies advocated by the British economist, John Maynard Keynes. If you deliberately ran a deficit in hard times, for example, it would be like putting your foot on the economy's gas pedal. In good times you'd have to remember to use the brakes, and build up surpluses. At all times it ought to be possible to protect Canadians against extreme hardship through social welfare programs. National unemployment insurance came to Canada in 1941, universal old age pensions in 1951, and, most interestingly, family allowances in 1945. Thanks to the "baby bonus", a monthly payment from the government of Canada for each child, even the poorest families could buy shoes.

The Northern economy seemed capable of generating wealth without limit because of its fabulous supplies of

NORTHWARD

Today is the day of the North.

Until quite recently only traversed by trappers and Indians, it is now the area of a development that has captured the imagination of the World.

For in the North lies one of the world's great treasure houses—gold, silver, copper, nickel.

In the North are an abundance of the raw materials upon which a huge pulp and paper industry is being built.

In the North is a fertile clay belt, already the home of an important and increasing agricultural community. Fortunately, too, the North contains a myriad of turbulent, surging rivers, many of which have now been tamed to turn great turbines and so generate electricity—the force that enables man to wrest from the hills the mineral wealth locked within and to convert the forest into a rich asset.

With the aid of developed water power the pioneers are moulding the destiny of the North to the needs of the nation. For water power is the vital factor of all Northern development: it is the "key resource," the one upon which the economic development of all other Northern resources depends.

NESBITT THOMSON

and Company Limited

Royal Bank Building, TORONTO

MONTREAL WATERLOO WINDSOR QUEBEC LONDON, ONT.

Throughout this century Canadians have been drawn to the wealth of Canada's Northern regions as in this ad from the 1920s.

resources that the world, especially the voracious Americans, wanted. Canada was one of the world's great mining countries, the world's greatest forestry country; it had hydro power galore, huge uranium deposits to fuel the nuclear age, productive farms and fisheries, manufacturing and financial know-how, and, to the delight of Albertans, vast reservoirs of oil and natural gas. It was one of the world's most attractive countries. Foreign capital poured in, and so did foreign peoples, as postwar immigration, still mostly from Europe, began changing the face of the country, especially cities like Toronto and Montreal.

By the late 1950s optimism about the country's future was so high that John Diefenbaker could revive the idea of a last frontier, in the far North, where great treasures were surely just waiting to be tapped by roads and railroads and pipelines reaching up from southern centres. Other Canadian optimists, led by a Toronto accountant, Walter Gordon, thought the country no longer needed constant injections of foreign capital, no longer needed to rely so heavily on American money and management to develop its industries.

The Diefenbaker vision was frustrated by a several-year pause in the postwar boom, and some of the earlier "megaprojects", such as the attempt to build a supersonic jet fighter plane (the AVRO "Arrow") had to be scrapped. But expansion resumed happily in the 1960s, another splendid decade. The country's 100th birthday year, celebrated with a spectacular World's Fair, Expo '67, arrived in the midst of the longest uninterrupted period of growth in Canadian history. There was more of everything — more lanes to the expressways, more storeys on the skyscrapers, more colour on television, more hockey teams in the NHL, more power in IBM's giant mainframe computers, billions more hamburgers sizzling at fast food restaurants. Governments built more schools and universities to serve the baby boomers, everyone got more and better health care, grants and subsidies offered more and more support to the arts.

Canadian wealth and prospects appeared so limitless that the Pearson government introduced a massive state pension plan, the Canada Pension Plan, in 1965, and universal health insurance — "free" health care for all Canadians — in 1966. The provinces were so confident of their future that many of them, led by Quebec, began acting like mini-nations. A generation of young Canadians, raised in one of the most affluent societies history had ever seen, began to wonder if they needed to listen to all their parents' advice about hard work, thrift, and sobriety. Sandals became their favoured footwear.

In one of history's richest societies, it seemed possible to consider bold new social arrangements. By the 1960s Canadian women were pouring into the work force, insisting on equal pay, challenging male domination of jobs on construction sites and in operating rooms, insisting on male help with the housework. Women chose not to have nearly as many children, and the birthrate fell strikingly.

The ecologically-minded hailed planned parenthood as a small step towards coping with the environmental disasters that proliferating, profligate humans were surely about to create. By the 1960s North America was so rich that governments and people could think seriously about clamping down on polluters and developing a new reverence for the natural ecological balance. Should resources and nature be conserved? Should Canadians recognize limits to growth? Should we continue to think of the Northern wilderness as development waiting to happen, or should we protect it as a fragile ecosystem?

Aboriginal Canadians, who had been marginalized and forgotten for much of the century, were determined to have their say in future development decisions. The native peoples enjoyed a kind of renaissance in the middle years of the century, as their health and physical welfare improved, an educated, politically adept leader-

ship developed, and guilt-ridden activists reminded mainstream Canada of past injustices. Native groups laid claim to vast areas of Canadian territory, demanded more powers of self-government, and lobbied successfully to limit pipeline developments in the Northwest Territories as well as Quebec Hydro's grandiose plans for re-engineering the James Bay watershed.

To hear the politicians talk, the country was so wealthy that it ought to be possible to satisfy everyone. There was money for environmental protection, money for native peoples, money to subsidize new industries in Atlantic Canada, and money to bail out bankrupt companies practically everywhere. There was more money for the unemployed, and now even seasonal workers were "insured" against being out of work in the off-season! More for culture, more for health care, more for women's groups — governments even started giving grants to groups whose purpose was to oppose their own policies. Something for everyone in the Christmas tree state.

In 1968, easily the most optimistic election year since 1904, the Liberals talked about giving Canada a "Just Society", the dream of philosophers throughout the

Canada's oil and gas reserves soared accordingly. Oil companies made record profits, provincial governments, especially Alberta's, skimmed off hundreds of millions in unexpected royalties, and the Western boom was something to behold. Edmonton and Calgary were turned into forests of cranes, drawing huge skyscrapers out of the prairie soil as oilmen competed for the largest erection (a contest they all lost to the CN Tower in Toronto) and Eastern financial institutions spouted money.

Natural gas, coal, electricity, even cordwood soared in value in the energy "crisis" of the 70s. Many other raw materials and foodstuffs were in demand in a world newly-conscious of the possibility of ever-growing shortages. It would be too bad for the world if the gloomy projections were right, but not too bad for Canada, the great resource storehouse. The insecure 70s saw yet another massive resource boom on the Canadian frontiers. Japanese investors developed coal mines in the Rockies, Saskatchewan's potash soared in value, Ontario and Quebec hydro generated windfall profits, and mining and smelting companies coined money. Even Newfoundland, battered so often by the vicissitudes of history and the low price of cod, seemed



Cartoonist Peter Kuch created the "Diefendollar" as the man from Prince Albert struggled with a lull in the postwar boom.

ages. It seemed to be an appropriate slogan for a party led by a kind of philosopher king, Pierre Trudeau, who liked to drive around Ottawa in flashy cars, wearing an ascot and sandals.

Postponing the Reckoning

The sheikhs of Arabia seemed to be doing more for Western Canada with a snap of their fingers than Ottawa had been able to do in a hundred years. When the Middle-East based oil cartel, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), began raising the price of a barrel of oil in the early 1970s — it went from \$U.S. 3.00 to \$39.00 by 1980 — the value of

poised to enjoy a bonanza servicing Hibernia and other oilfields in the North Atlantic; in the meantime the price of cod was high and the fishing was good (and you could draw "pogey" in the off-season).

Once again the vision was of moving north. Now oilmen would lead the way. It was thought that vast pools of petroleum lay waiting to be discovered under the Arctic Islands and the Beaufort Sea. At the kinds of prices predicted for the 1980s and 1990s, Canadians would be building huge pipelines down the Mackenzie Valley, shipping oil and gas by tanker through the old North-West Passage. Jack Gallagher, the visionary promoter of Dome Petroleum, planned to use icebreakers

to open a tanker passage right across the North Pole. It was projected that by the 1990s one huge new extraction plant would have to be opened every year to process the thick, black muck of the Athabasca oil sands — a huge reservoir of black gold. These and other great resource megaprojects would ensure that the Twentieth and then the Twenty-First Centuries indeed belonged to Canada.

The Trudeau government was determined to share the wealth nationally, not let it be concentrated in the provinces that happened to own the petroleum resources. It engaged in a running power struggle with Alberta, culminating in the National Energy Program of 1980, a bewilderingly complex set of policies aimed at assuring national control of Canada's energy future. Ottawa's hope was to take control of the tremendous revenues generated as oil became scarcer and scarcer ("experts" thought it would be worth well over \$100 a barrel by the 1990s), and use them to provide benefits for Canadians across the country. The country's generous welfare state, especially "free" health care, was already becoming unexpectedly expensive.

Everything about the NEP turned into a disaster. It drove some oil companies out of Canada, and encouraged gullible Canadians to buy up other oil companies at what turned out to be the highest prices in history (the foreigners who sold out were the big winners). The NEP deeply angered Westerners, especially Albertans, who knew full well that Ottawa had never stripped Ontario and Quebec of the revenue from, say, lumbering or hydro-electric power.

Worst of all, the NEP and Ottawa's whole megaproject strategy, was based on faulty economics. All of the seventies' assumptions about energy and other resource scarcity turned out to be exactly wrong. A decade of high prices had encouraged a growth in world supply that far outran demand. In the early 1980s the OPEC cartel stumbled trying to maintain high oil prices against fundamental economic laws. What went up, up, up now came down, down, down, bringing down with it all of the easy assumptions of Canada's energy planners and visionaries. In the ruins of a decade's optimism and policy errors, the collapse of Dome Petroleum, the extravagance and irrelevance of Ottawa's own Petro-Canada, governments were left to cope with all the commitments and entitlements they had given to voters over the years.

It was already becoming evident that the good old days of global economic supremacy for North America were passing into history, at a rate almost exactly measurable by the numbers of Volkswagens, Toyotas, Hondas and other imported automobiles Canadians preferred to home-made ones. During the 1970s the manufacture of television sets, baseball gloves, baseballs, T-shirts, and hundreds of thousands of other products

moved "off-shore" to lower-wage producers. When some of these countries, especially Germany and Japan, became high-wage producers, they then concentrated on high-tech industries, challenging North America in the most advanced areas of knowledge-based enterprise.

In the 50s and 60s there had been fears that American multinational corporations would dominate the global economy. Now the American dinosaurs struggled to lose weight and gain fitness to meet challenges from the Pacific as well as the prospering European Economic Community.

Many Canadian manufacturing and agricultural industries had been shielded from foreign competition for generations by tariffs and other government policies. The old pattern of exporting back to the Mother Country had long since eroded, partly because Britain herself had remarried, casting her lot with Europe. Canadian foreign trade had become overwhelmingly North American — 75 percent of it with the United States. We traded three times as much with the Americans as with all the rest of the world combined.

In the 1980s Canadian businessmen and politicians realized that Canada had to cast its lot as part of a major free trading area. It was important to formalize a free trade agreement to safeguard access to the American market and pave the way for future growth — especially now that the Northern resource boom had gone bust. The Conservative government of Brian Mulroney negotiated the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement, which effectively ended a century-old tradition of Canadian protectionism vis-à-vis the United States.

Free trade was the central issue in the 1988 general election, as it had been in 1911 — although the parties had reversed their positions. Manufacturers and other businessmen now lobbied hard for free trade; the Liberals, the NDP, and trade unions resisted it. The Conservative victory meant acceptance of the deal. The FTA was signed in 1989. Five years later it became the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), when the new Liberal government went along with the American interest in bringing in Mexico. Expanding Canada's wealth through trade liberalization and a determination to become internationally competitive had become a bipartisan policy.

In the meantime the baby boomers had grown up and begun to make their peace with materialism. The 70s and 80s were uneven decades — while some parts of the country would prosper, others would have hard times — but there was no prolonged downturn, and for many millions of Canadians the everyday good times rolled on. The 80s were the decade of BMWs, Jeep Cherokees, minivans, lawn tractors, CDs, camcorders, VCRs and Nintendo, mineral water, the Blue Jays in the summer, and snowbirding in Florida or Arizona in the winter. On Christmas Day even the kids in far-off

Heart's Content, Churchill, Norman Wells, and Whitehorse would unwrap new pairs of Nikes and Reeboks, or that hottest new footwear, roller blades.

Canadians were highly-taxed compared to Americans, and the Mulroney government helped destroy itself by introducing in 1991 the most unpopular tax of all, a 7 percent levy on all goods and services, the GST. Even so, governments' appetites for revenue kept growing as costs of the social welfare entitlements and other programs they had launched ballooned beyond anyone's expectations. To pay the bills, and, they hoped, to keep stimulating the economy, the politicians resorted to borrowing.

They also starved the defence budget. Beginning in the 1960s successive governments allowed Canada's considerable military establishment to wither and shrink. By the 1980s the Canadian Forces were equipped mainly for UN peacekeeping duties and the maintenance of domestic order in time of crisis. Canadians left the bigger job of Cold War preparedness, of staring down and defeating Communism, largely to the Americans.

The government of Canada ran its last budget surplus in 1972-73. In the ruins of the NEP and a serious recession in the early 80s the Trudeau Liberals let the annual deficit soar above \$30 billion. Despite promises, the Conservatives kept it there, mortgaging the country's wealth, billing future taxpayers, rather than face the hard choices that real cutbacks would entail. So much had been said for so many years about Canada's unlimited natural wealth, that most politicians, and perhaps most Canadians, vaguely believed that the future would somehow take care of itself. A country as rich as Canada couldn't ever run aground on the shoals of debt and taxes. Could it?

Canada's Century?

The early 1990s were a confusing time for the country's economy, and there was considerable pessimism about the short- and medium-term future. There was one over-riding non-economic question — the future of Quebec. It had preoccupied politicians time and again for a third of a century, and had produced bitter constitutional wrangling and continuing doubt about the survival of Canada itself. Many business and financial experts were also worried that the whole national edifice was having to bear such a burden of interest payments on public debt that it was close to crumbling under the strain. In 1994 Ottawa's total indebtedness passed \$500 billion and was continuing to increase at more than \$100 million a day, \$40 billion a year, with no end in sight. Interest payments alone were consuming one-third of all the revenues generated by a tax load most citizens considered to be oppressive and a drag on growth. In the severe recession of the early 1990s many provinces, which had all developed spendthrift habits

over the years, also slid into a tar pit of debt and interest payments. Some teetered close to bankruptcy. People in the traditionally well-to-do provinces, British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario, became less willing to subsidize other Canadians in the name of equality.

Governments tried to cut back. By the 1990s few political theorists still believed in the "do-everything" state. Many believed that governments in fact had trouble doing anything efficiently; thus the rage for "privatization", as governments got out of the business of supplying electricity, selling liquor, running airports, even collecting garbage. Financial pressures caused govern-



Northern mines faced an uncertain future as the century neared its finale.

ments for the first time in decades to clamp down hard on civil service salaries, reduce support for education and health care, and began to reconsider the assumptions that had supported past generosity.

The idea that Canadians should be "universally" entitled to social benefits, regardless of their income, regardless of their willingness to retrain themselves or relocate in search of work, gradually slid into disfavour. There was much talk of redesigning or streamlining Canada's welfare state to take it into the new century. Other Canadians began asking hard questions about the need to streamline immigration policy, and whether it was still desirable to add hundreds of thousands of newcomers every year to a country that no longer had homesteads or other "freebies" to give to newcomers.

A few mega-projects were still underway, including construction of one of the world's great bridges finally to link Prince Edward Island to the mainland, and the

troubled Hibernia development off Newfoundland. But the virtual disappearance of cod from its waters — the worst fisheries crisis in 500 years — had caused terrible adjustment problems in Canada's poorest province. The richest province, Ontario, had problems of its own trying to adjust to free trade while carrying the heavy debts accumulated by a spendthrift NDP government. British Columbia, superficially the most favoured province as the booming Pacific nations eyed its resource endowment, was no longer so sure how deeply it believed in cutting down beautiful big trees or opening ugly new mines, and struggled to balance resource jobs and incomes against environmentalists' preservationist ethics. Many Canadian mining companies were finding better exploration and royalty deals in the wilderness areas of South America.

Trade with the United States, and then Mexico, soared under the free trade agreements, and by the mid-1990s few observers seriously believed that it would be possible to turn the clock back to protection. During the Twentieth Century Canadians' destiny as the northern producers in the North American continental economy had become clear. It was also obvious from the continuing strength of Canadian industries, including many forms of high-technology computer and electronics and educational industries, that Canada would not be a nation of "hewers of wood and drawers of water." It had a fine endowment of human resources, excellent universities, and an advanced transportation and communications infrastructure to lead it into the new century. When the Twentieth Century dawned the talk was of rocks and trees, railroads and hydro dams. Preparing for the Twenty-First Century, Canadians talked about computer software, biotechnology, telecommunications, the Internet, and the 500-channel television universe.

The uncertainties of the early 1990s, especially the burden of debt, were reflected in persistently high interest rates and a currency that tended to slide downwards against the U.S. dollar, the Deutsche mark, and the yen. As they realized when they went abroad and bought coffee or Big Macs, or had to take out expensive health insurance before even leaving home, Canadians' standard of living was beginning to slip compared to some other peoples. The country had serious, unresolved social problems, including the failure of its northernmost inhabitants, various bands of native peoples, to find a role and culture that provided both affluence and a strong sense of identity.

At the end of the Twentieth Century there would be only about half the numbers of Canadians Laurier had predicted — tragically less than half if Quebec separated. If you measured national success by numbers of people, or if you measured it by the perfectionist, unhistorical standards Canadians often applied, the Twentieth Century had not belonged to Canada. Call back the

people who had lived in 1900, however, and show them the progress their descendants had enjoyed, the affluence and security, and they would surely marvel at how good it had been. In fact by some statistical measurements the growth of Canadian wealth *per capita* in the twentieth century had surpassed that in any other country, including the United States and Japan. In this sense the century had belonged to Canada.

And perhaps it was just as well that it was still a relatively unpopulated country, that Chicoutimi had not become a new New York, Winnipeg a replica of Chicago, Vancouver the Los Angeles of the North. The exact value of the nation's stock of tangible natural resources might fluctuate wildly in years to come (did the Northwest Territories possess acres of diamonds, for example?). But Canada still possessed a resource bound to increase in value in a crowded world: empty space. Canada remained a country where there was room to journey in beauty and solitude. This alone guaranteed that Canadians would be one of the world's most favoured peoples in the Twenty-First Century. ♦

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Quote Unquote

We propose to sell our goods for Cash Only; in selling goods to have only One Price.

— **Department store founder Timothy Eaton.**

I'm always available to improve the economy of Canada.

— **Businessman Frank Stronach.**

They say business is the law of the jungle. I think it's the law of life.

— **Press tycoon Roy Thomson.**

The success of enterprises like the T. Eaton Co., the Massey-Harris Co., the Bank of Montreal, and other such concerns organized and managed by Canadians, has done more to strengthen our national feeling than all the speeches and posturing of our politicians since we first elected representative assemblies.

— **Historian Frank Underhill.**

You don't deserve to be called an entrepreneur until you've mortgaged your house to the business.

— **Communications mogul Ted Rogers.**

Debauching the Archangels

By P.B. Waite

The handsomest portrait we have on our money is Sir Wilfrid Laurier on the \$5 bill. The next best is Sir Robert Borden on the \$100. Mackenzie King, worried, watchful and wary still, is on the \$50. (Sir John A. Macdonald on the \$10 bill is, sadly, but a caricature.)

Laurier, our prime minister from 1896 to 1911, was by instinct what in French is called a *litterateur*, a man of letters, though he was a lawyer by profession and a politician by vocation. Laurier had been educated in a hard school; he came to politics by resisting for twenty years the heavy hand of the Church in Quebec; now, Prime Minister of Canada, he had brought an apostolic delegate from Rome to talk sense to the Quebec (and other) bishops. There was steel in Laurier that comes through in the portrait, if it was flexible steel, it was there nevertheless. Laurier was a man not easily frightened.

The country over which he presided as prime minister was smaller and narrower than now; not in area of course, but in population, interests, identities, preoccupations, prejudices even. Newspapers kept Canadians informed of the doings of the world outside, but the essential *localness* of things remained. That trains had begun to destroy distance had been true for fifty years, and railways were a major preoccupation of Canadian politics, Dominion and provincial; but still the local web tended to hold people, loosely but effectively, within a 20-mile radius of where they worked and lived. The motor car was still an invention, a curiosity, a trouble; cars were not yet competing with horses, though in another half-century they would make the streets virtually horseless. For the young who wanted personal transportation, the bicycle was the thing; bicy-



The aged Laurier mercilessly caricatured by N. McConnell in the "Toronto News", 13 December 1917.



Laurier's Canada appeared to be the best of all possible worlds in this 1897 cartoon by J.W. Bengough.

cles did not have to be stabled or fed; they took up very little room, and were ready to ride on a moment's notice.

By the census of 1901 Canada had 5.4 million people. Of these 88% were Easterners, that is, they lived in Ontario or in provinces east of it. In 1995 Canada's population is close to 30 million, and the distribution has shifted, some 30% of Canadians living west of the Ontario-Manitoba boundary.

Canadian politics and its parliament had evolved to reflect these shifts, with a sometimes wrenching jolt at each decennial redistribution of House of Commons seats. In 1867 Nova Scotia had 19 seats in an 181-seat Commons; in the 1990s it has 11 seats in a 295-seat one. Federal states are complicated to understand, and to govern, but federalism gives flexibility to what might otherwise be an ungovernable mass. Unitary governments can be effective over fairly compact areas, such as, for example, France; but even smaller unitary states like Great Britain have special conditions attending the governance of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Think of the sheer work of Philip II of Spain in the sixteenth century, trying to handle all the local details of the whole Spanish peninsula, to say nothing of the administrative oversight of the far-flung Spanish Empire!

The respective responsibilities of the provinces and the Dominion were set down in 1867 in the British North America Act, a statute of the British parliament.

After that the meaning and construction of the Act were worked out in Canadian courts (the Supreme Court of Canada was established in 1875) and on appeal, less reliably by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London. British construction and readings of Canadian Acts, Dominion and provincial, Canadians frequently found puzzling, if not at times quixotic. Appeals to the Privy Council in criminal cases were in effect abolished before 1900, but in civil cases they remained until 1949.

Thus interpreted by the Courts, the resulting constitution turned out to be rather more decentralized than Canada's founders had intended; but more powers to the provinces at least squared with the reality of big provinces, some of which were the size of imperial domains — Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia, to name just three. It is a long way from Gaspé to James Bay, from Cornwall to Lake of the Woods, from Fort St. John to Victoria, B.C. The pro-provincial slant of judicial interpretation was modified in the 1930s by two things. For one, new inventions required new constitutional prescriptions; in the early 1930s, radio and aeronautics were subjects that the Privy Council, somewhat surprisingly, given its history, awarded to the federal government. Second, the problems of the depression required measures such as unemployment insurance (declared unconstitutional by the Privy Council in the late 1930s) that the federal government brought in by way of constitutional amendment in 1940.

Canadian politics at the provincial level in 1900 was a world of eight different legislatures: three of them Maritime, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, British Columbia, and the North-West Territories, then sitting at Regina. (From part of the Territories, Saskatchewan and Alberta would be established as new provinces in 1905.) Each province, large and small, was endowed with similar powers, though the Maritime provinces were of very different size and scale. Prince Edward Island, with a population of 100,000, was intensely local in feeling and attitude; its politics were the politics of railways, agriculture, and by the 1930s and after one might have said cynically, that of paving. In one critical Prince Edward Island by-election in 1966 there was so much gratuitous paving being done that a farmer put a sign on his field, perilously proximate to the main road, "Please don't pave this field. It's my only pasture." It was another form of a very old political game, charming, humorous, as Leacock saw it in *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, but not always very nice. Thus the word "province" was a word signifying a great deal of variety of Canada, even if the habits and penchants of the Canadian public made the styles of provincial politics comparable. The exception was Quebec, where politics in French was not as in English, though the constitutional trappings were the same.

Quebec civil law, the style of French Canadians, made things quite different. Life in French had (and has) its own unique vivacity. Maurice Duplessis, Quebec premier for nearly 20 years between 1936 and 1959, was once asked how he was. He replied, "Je suis dangereusement bien." That was full of meaning, but it doesn't translate well. No English-Canadian premier is likely to have said that, though more than one might have thought (and acted) it.

Politics in Ottawa has been presided over by a series of prime ministers, some of great talent, tact and versatility: Laurier, Borden, King, St. Laurent, Lester Pearson; others have been more abrupt and idiosyncratic, Arthur Meighen, R.B. Bennett, John Diefenbaker, and Pierre Trudeau. All have governed the country on the basis of national political parties that provide the prime minister with his working majority in the House of Commons, and from which majority he selects his cabinet of ministers. He tries, so far as his slate of MPs allows, to devise an administrative machine that is representative of Canada's geography, regions, interests, even prejudices.

The character and attitudes of Canadian prime ministers are more important to the political life of Canada than are those of the American presidents to the United States, for Canadian prime ministers wield in their own country a great deal more political power. American presidents were never intended to get their way easily with their Congress; they may wheedle or cajole or threaten, but they don't always succeed. Canadian prime ministers have the luxury of creating the legislation, passing it, and administering it. The parts of the system inform and strengthen each other. A Canadian government with a strong and not-too-restive majority at its back could, as Sir John A. Macdonald once put it, "debauch a committee of archangels." It is also called "responsible government". What Macdonald meant was that sometimes responsible government could act irresponsibly. Once in power, a Canadian prime minister with a sufficient majority is hard to shake out short of a general election. Diefenbaker in the early 1960s, visibly past his prime, was difficult to get rid of; after the 1963 election it took a further four years and a full party convention to do it.

All Canadian prime ministers owe their support to political parties. Parties can be defined by ideologies, but can be more crudely described as machines for winning elections. Originally formed to make popular some political idea or principle, it was not difficult for them to become preoccupied with their own existence. By 1900 Canadian political parties were already broadly based, the result of a wide franchise (though women were excluded until near the end of the First World War), and a big country. In power they found, as a rule, that the simple, ineluctable necessity of making

governments, forming policies, across a wide and diverse spectrum of the country, meant that all doctrines got watered down, indeed sometimes were replaced by questions of more material interest. It could be said by Laurier's time that whatever party be the winner of an election, Liberal or Conservative, the country would be administered in much the same way, the main difference being the personnel of the government. Thus the aphorism of Andre Siegfried, the perceptive Alsatian who visited Canada in 1898 and 1904, "it is not the party which is at the service of the idea, but the idea which is at the service of the party." National parties, across seven provinces, had already the well developed habit of emasculating ideas.

The truth was that Canadian political parties were apt to fear the power and sweep of ideas, for ideas were often another name for prejudices, bigotry, passionate convictions. Convictions can make hard politics; and it may well be that a grubby penchant for patronage is



better than fierce and unbridled war of ideologies. Canadian political parties thus learned the art of compromise early; by 1900, with Sir Wilfrid Laurier as prime minister, compromise was something of which he was master. Especially so when tempered, as was his wont, with judicious doses of delay. It used to be said that when Laurier arrived in Heaven he would suggest to le bon Dieu an amicable and leisurely compromise with Satan.

Early in 1899 Laurier faced a fierce conflict in Cabinet: English-Canadian enthusiasm for supporting the British in the Boer War in South Africa, and the equal reluctance of French Canadians to have anything at all to do with it. French Canadian sympathies were, if anything, apt to be with the Boers. Laurier proposed to Cabinet a neat and ingenious, and to French Canadians, outrageous compromise: Canada would not send an official contingent of soldiers to South Africa. Of course not. But it would equip and transport any volunteers that might want to go. Before the decision was announced, there was a debate among Laurier's

friends, young Henri Bourassa speaking out sharply. Laurier interrupted him:

Laurier: Mon cher Henri, les circonstances sont difficiles ...

Bourassa: C'est parce que les circonstances sont difficiles que je vous demande de rester fidèle à votre parole. Gouverner, c'est avoir assez de cœur pour savoir, à un moment donné, risquer le pouvoir pour sauver un principe ...

Laurier: Ah, mon cher ami, vous manquez d'esprit pratique.*

The group around Laurier had never heard such language, but Laurier tolerated much from Bourassa, then and later. He loved him and Bourassa always knew that. But there, in a nutshell, is the classic debate between principle and expediency.

The war that Laurier's successor, Sir Robert Borden, faced was far more formidable and few English Canadians were prepared to compromise. Robert Borden was a Nova Scotian Presbyterian from the Annapolis Valley; his portrait on the \$100 bill shows something of his rugged integrity. Originally a school teacher, he became a lawyer by hard work and persistence. When the going got tough he would say to himself, in Latin, "Work and shut up." He was the sort of lawyer whom you would trust with anything. He was also determined to clean up Canadian party politics, especially patronage. The character of Canadian patronage is disarmingly described in Leacock's *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, published in 1912, partly about the 1911 election that brought Borden to power. Edward Drone, an independent candidate, was running on a unique platform: simple honesty and public morality. As Leacock has it, already three or four voters had taken Drone aside and explained that what the town needed

was a straight, clean, non-partisan post office, built on a piece of ground of a strictly non-partisan character, and constructed under contracts that were not tainted and smirched with party affiliation. Two or three men were willing to show to Drone just where a piece of ground of this character could be bought ... and that if Drone believed, as he had said he did, in a purified civil service, he ought to begin by purifying Trelawney, [the present postmaster].

Those were certainly some of Borden's ideas, a non-partisan civil service and promotion by competitive examination. Borden also thought in terms of the public

ownership of utilities such as railways, telegraphs, and telephones. There was a long Nova Scotian tradition of such attitudes; Borden was, with some other Maritime politicians like R.B. Bennett, his younger contemporary, what we have since come to call a "Red Tory".

The First World War, 1914-1918, swamped these ideas with a more stern mandate. Borden knew, of course, Canada would have to fight by Britain's side, but the more he saw of British generalship the less enthusiastic an imperialist did he become. The incompetent generals who produced the Battle of the Somme in 1916, or Passchendaele in 1917, aroused in him a stern and bitter wrath. Borden was at his outspoken best at a meeting with the British prime minister, Lloyd George, in July 1918 at the latter's country house, over British incompetence and use of Canadian troops at Passchendaele. Henry Borden, Borden's nephew, was there and recalled his uncle, finger pointing at Lloyd George, his voice shaking with anger:

Mr. Prime Minister, I want to tell you that, if ever there is a repetition of the battle of Passchendaele, not a Canadian soldier will leave the shores of Canada so long as the Canadian people entrust the government of their country to my hands.

That was Borden, righteous, honest, long-suffering, but coming down hard when finally outraged. It was Borden who insisted that Canada sign the Treaty of Versailles in her own right.

Mackenzie King succeeded Borden after the election of 1921 and King's portrait on the \$50 bill is a good view of him, watchful, worried, suspicious, as if about to scent danger. He had a remarkable seismograph, that allowed him to detect underground rumblings within his party and the electorate. He was a bachelor, and anything but a misogynist; his difficulty was that he sought as wife a lady who had beauty, money, intelligence, education, charm, manners, who adored him and who was available. He never found such a paragon. That did not prevent him from searching, which he did most of his life. King began his public career as Deputy Minister of Labour, a young man on the make, who saw in social reform not only things that needed to be done for society but which would also help Mackenzie King. It is easy to underrate King; many did, and lived to regret their lack of perception. He was talented, hard working, the only Canadian prime minister to get a Ph.D. (from Harvard, no less), gifted with an almost limitless capacity for justifying to himself whatever it was he felt constrained to believe. He was unblushingly importunate, and his motions in early life were directed at upward mobility, in later life toward the safety of the Liberal party and himself. It was King who invented the sleight-of-hand that got him out of the political crisis of 1926.

King never forgot that the basis of the political success of the Liberal party was Quebec's traditional sup-

* **Laurier:** My dear Henri, the circumstances are difficult ...

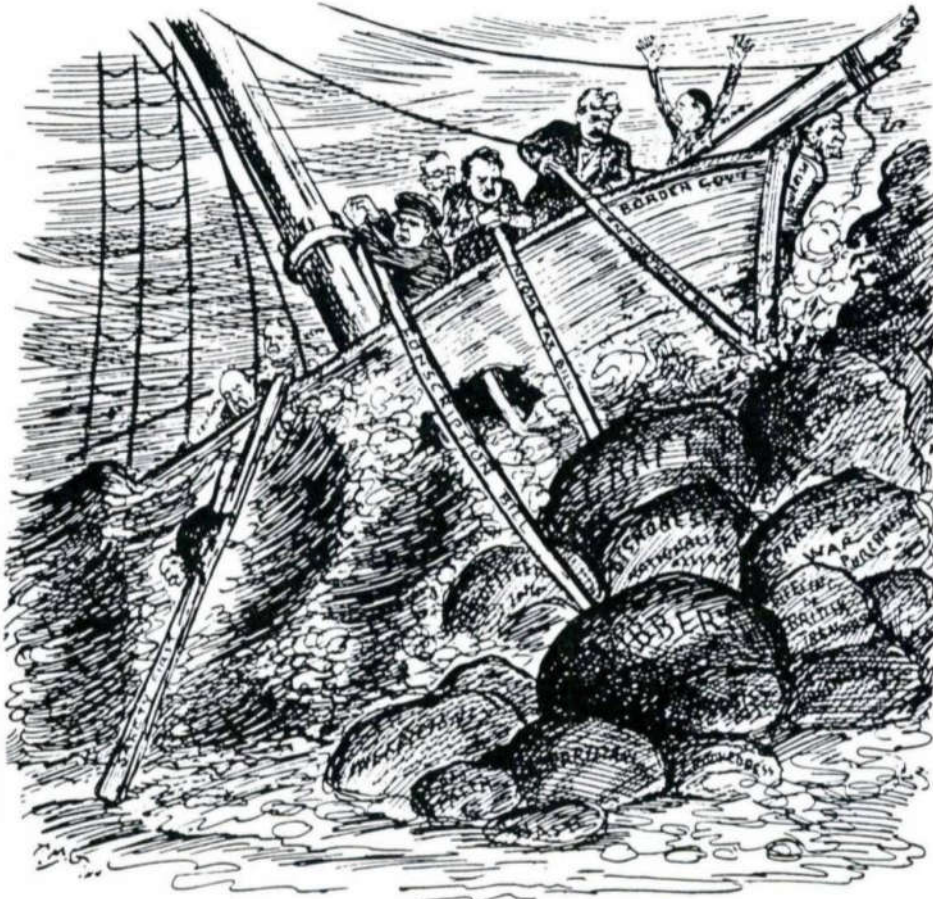
Bourassa: It's because the circumstances are difficult that I ask you to stay faithful to your word. To govern is to have enough spirit to know when, at any given moment, to risk power to save a principle ...

Laurier: Ah, my dear friend, you lack a practical sense.

port of Laurier. Laurier's mantle King simply took over saying that Laurier would have wanted it that way. Lady Laurier seemed to confirm that, giving Laurier House to King in her will. There, in the upper rooms, surrounded by his books, his papers, and his mother's ghost, King presided over the affairs of Canada, through most of the 1920s, half of the 1930s, and nearly all the 1940s.

King's long rule was twice interrupted; once briefly in 1926 for a couple of interesting weeks by the King-

was prime minister. But he has been too maligned. He came from a humble New Brunswick home, and ended up a Calgary corporation lawyer; by integrity, brains, hard work and good luck he was a millionaire by 1927 when, having been in and out of politics for thirty years, he was made leader of the Conservative party. His working creed he took from John Wesley's Methodism, in whose faith he had been raised: work as hard as you can, save as much as you can, and give all



This partisan Liberal cartoon of 1917 makes the Borden government's problems appear much worse than they actually were.

Byng crisis of 1926; more important was his defeat at the polls in the 1930 general election by the new, aggressive Conservative leader, R.B. Bennett. Bennett was rich, confident, capable, ready to take on anything Canada and the world presented him with; but it was an unlucky time to be in power, as he soon discovered.

Bennett enjoys perhaps the worst reputation of any Canadian prime minister, with the possible exception of Brian Mulroney, and Mulroney's may well be adjusted in the perspective of history. Bennett's standing has still not recovered from the disastrous depression of the 1930s, during the worst years of which, 1930-1935, he

you can. This creed had made him rich and gave him his social principles and charity.

Bennett's economic/social legislation came in two stages. First, the creation of the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission in 1932, despite resistance from private broadcasters; then the creation of the Bank of Canada in 1934 in the teeth of the opposition of the chartered banks. Bennett's social legislation was, first, the Farmers' Creditors Arrangements Act of 1934, applying company bankruptcy law to drought-stricken, mortgage-ridden prairie farms, to allow families to stay on their land rather than lose them utterly to foreclosure.



R.B. Bennett, as seen by Arch Dale of the "Winnipeg Free Press".

Next came the so-called "New Deal" legislation of 1935, the centrepiece of which was unemployment insurance, later struck down by the Privy Council. Few governments could have survived such years and Bennett's went down to defeat in the 1935 election.

Once more in 1935 King was helped by the French-Canadian vote. Indeed, the political support of the French Canadian wing of the Liberal party was a constant through all of King's general elections. From 37 of Quebec's seats in 1921, King's party went to 59 in 1925, 60 in 1926; even in 1930, the election King lost to R.B. Bennett, he took 40 of Quebec's 65 seats; in 1935 it was 56, in 1940 he got 61, in 1945, 53. Those figures represent a formidable buttress against political

disasters elsewhere in Canada. Not without reason did King listen to, and rely on, his Quebec lieutenant, Ernest Lapointe, and after Lapointe's death in 1941, to his successor, Louis St. Laurent.

The Second World War, 1939-1945, was fought by Canada with the strong support and the will of English Canada, but much less so from French Canada, which retained its isolationist habits of thought. King had to balance these two polarities. King believed that Hitler meant well. Having met him in 1937 he believed he understood Hitler. King did not, however; besides, his German was abysmal and he had to understand Hitler through translation. King was also influenced by long-standing anti-British attitudes in External Affairs, especially by his Under-Secretary of State, O.D. Skelton, the able civil service mandarin who presided over External Affairs from 1925 until his death in 1941. Skelton was an English-Canadian nationalist who believed, as many French Canadians did, that Britain had been leading Canada by the nose for all too long. Skelton's memo to King at the end of August, 1939, just as war broke out, is fierce and bitter:

The first casualty in this war has been Canada's claim to independent control of her own destinies ... we have thus far been relegated to the role of a Crown Colony. We are drifting into a war resulting ... from policies and diplomatic actions initiated months ago without our knowledge or expectation ... the foreign policy of Canada is in the hands of the Prime Minister of Great Britain ... The British Government with bland arrogance has assumed that whatever its policy, whether it be appeasement or challenge, we could be counted on to trot behind, blindly and dumbly, to chaos.

Action Nationale, a French Canadian nationalist journal, had said rather the same thing at the time of the Ethiopian crisis of 1935:

Nous ne devons rien à l'Angleterre ... Pas un homme, pas un sou, pas un fusil, pas une cartouche pour les guerres de l'Angleterre ... *

King had to try to balance views like those against almost the whole of English Canada's instinct to support England for whatever reason, cost what it might. English Canadians could not be isolationist in 1939, however Britain might have blundered into the war. King understood that. The British Commonwealth was for him a family affair; children grew up, but they did not abandon their family. Still, they could decide the degree of their commitment to it. There was, however, little of that sense of limits in English Canadians, espe-

* "We owe nothing to England ... [We will give] not a man, not a penny, not a gun, not a cartridge for the wars of England ..."

cially after the fall of Denmark, Norway, and France in 1940 to the might of the German army.

King thus had backed into the war, but he had as Cabinet an able and energetic group of ministers, who were by no means averse to being authoritarian, and they ran a very effective war for him. King had insisted from the start that there would be no conscription for overseas service; and though there came to be conscription for home defence, King and his French-Canadian ministers as well as some English-Canadian ones, held conscription to that. It worked until late in the war. Then, in the autumn of 1944, Canadian army casualties in the Italian campaign, and those in Normandy forced the issue of conscription for overseas service. The Cabinet split three ways; the Minister of National Defence, J.L. Ralston, resigned; after a bitter crisis in Cabinet, the home defence troops were sent overseas and gave a good account of themselves.

King's last major contribution was bringing Newfoundland into Confederation, with clever initiatives and prodding by Jack Pickersgill, his percipient secretary, and a mighty propaganda effort by Newfoundlander Joey Smallwood. Newfoundland joined Confederation 31 March 1949. King had stepped down as prime minister the previous August; he was then 74 years old and feeling it. He died in 1950, in communication with interesting ladies, domestic and abroad, to the very end.

King's successor was Louis St. Laurent, a Quebec lawyer of courage, integrity, and not a little charm. He was quick on his feet and his approachableness was quite disarming. In 1949 he was walking the University of British Columbia campus with the President, Larry MacKenzie. The latter stopped and introduced a graduate student, who said with a brashness not uncharacteristic of the genus, "Mr. St. Laurent, when are we going to have a Canadian flag?" "Young man," the Prime Minister replied, "is a flag a symbol of unity or disunity?" "Unity, of course," the student replied. "That's your answer," said St. Laurent amiably, and walked serenely on.

St. Laurent gave his ministers more freedom than they had under King, and he made decisions with a promptness and vigour that King would never have done. King liked to dither: St. Laurent did not. He backed the United Nations to the hilt, backed NATO, authorized Canadian participation in the Korean War in 1950, and in the process won the elections of 1949 and 1953 hands down, leaving the Conservatives just nowhere.

The St. Laurent government, 1948-1957, gave Canada good government, but over the long years of Liberal hegemony since 1935 it had grown insensitive to public opinion. What the government wanted it got or it took, backed by the strong majorities of 1949 and

KING THE TUMBLER



KNOCK HIM DOWN AND HE BOBS RIGHT UP

"Knock him down and he bobs right up". Mackenzie King as sketched by Arch Dale in the 1930s.

1953. St. Laurent was a benign, civilized, avuncular figure, "Uncle Louis" as he was called in 1949, patting children on the head and kissing babies. He was so effective on the hustings and in power that he made governing Canada seem easy. By 1956 he was not as vigorous as he had been, and his old habit, giving ministers room for manoeuvre, had got to the point where he seemed to be just out of it.

Some of the Liberal ministers had been in power for a long time. King had appointed C.D. Howe Minister of Railways in 1935; Howe went through the war as Minister of Munitions and Supply and ended as Minister of Trade and Commerce from 1948 to 1957. He liked a strong hand and he made quick decisions. He used to say about the latter that he hoped that 51% were right.

The Trans-Canada gas pipeline, brought in in 1956, was an example of the right decision brought about the wrong way. It showed the St. Laurent government at its most insensitive. It was an excellent idea, a gas pipeline across Canada, from the province with the gas, Alberta, to the provinces that needed it and were ready to buy it, Ontario and Quebec. It was not unreasonable that the federal government should back the loan required, rather the way it had backed the CPR seventy-five years before. The pipeline company was Texan in origin and it had a timetable and it needed money, and the Government resolutely stood to both. But there had been little preparation of public opinion; the Conservative



Winnipeg Free Press

The ice is thin and treacherous, and Louis St. Laurent, Lester Pearson and Co. may yet come to grief. Cartoon by Peter Kuch.

party thought they smelled a rat, and did not like the Liberals getting another national achievement to their credit. So they opposed the pipeline with every device in their power. It was not pretty; the Government behaved in a bullying fashion; and the press persuaded the Canadian public that the St. Laurent government was riding roughshod over Parliament. The Government resorted to closure and got the Pipeline Bill through, but it was a public relations disaster. The Trans-Canada Pipeline was a success despite all that, and by 1958 natural gas had reached Toronto and Montreal.

By then the St. Laurent government was out of office. Its administrative skills, its willingness to co-operate with provincial governments of whatever stripe (something King would not have done), its sheer competence, availed it little against the massive press fallout from the pipeline debate. St. Laurent was no longer really in command, and his style seemed in 1957 out of step with the times. The Liberals knew he was not well, but they would keep him as leader, as one Liberal put it unkindly, "even if they had to run him stuffed". But it did not work against a phenomenon the Liberals had not encountered before, a populist campaigner, armed with rhetoric and resolution, and with a flair for handling a new medium, TV, that St. Laurent not only did not have, but scorned as vulgar grandstanding.

John Diefenbaker was a criminal lawyer from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. Criminal lawyers are apt to be good actors; Diefenbaker as a young criminal lawyer

had persuaded juries of clients' innocence in spite of evidence to the contrary. TV was a natural medium for him, part sincerity, part hokum, the one helping the other. As a later prime minister (Brian Mulroney) is said to have remarked, "In TV sincerity is everything, and if you can fake it, you've got it made." Diefenbaker did not always know whether he was or he wasn't sincere, but he looked it, and he knew he could carry audiences with it. His campaign of 1957 was victory, that of 1958 triumph.

The first Diefenbaker government, 1957-58, was a minority government; nevertheless in short order it provided increased pensions for the old, the blind, the disabled; increased support prices for agriculture; increased adjustment grants to poorer provinces. Within six months Diefenbaker believed he could get a majority government, and thanks to maladroit moves by the Liberals he got one. He wiped the floor with their non-confidence debate in Parliament and then on the hustings in the March, 1958 election. The Conservatives elected 208 members; the Liberals under Lester Pearson got only 49. Pearson watched the returns via TV and an oyster dinner and later remarked, "The oysters were excellent; the TV programme was terrible." It was the biggest victory in the long history of Canadian general elections.

Diefenbaker did not know quite what to do with that big majority and the horde of incompetent backbenchers who had ridden into the House of Commons

on his bandwagon, but his ego grew with every passing month. He had an irascible temper both in the House of Commons and in his office. His colleagues grew to fear him; fear may be as useful as Machiavelli said it was, provided the leader be decisive. Diefenbaker was not; it was often impossible to get him to make up his mind. It was said in Ottawa that Diefenbaker oscillated between the anti-nuclear arms views of his External Affairs Minister, Howard Green, on Mondays and Wednesdays, and pro-nuclear ones of his Defence Minister, Douglas Harkness, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. That issue, and Diefenbaker himself, alienated the Americans, not least President John F. Kennedy.

In the June 1962 election Diefenbaker lost his huge majority of 1958 and ended with a minority government. It did not improve his capacity to make decisions. The nuclear arms issue eventually brought down his government early in 1963; there was an internal cabinet revolt and the election of 1963 was on. It came to be, as Diefenbaker saw it, himself and the Canadian people versus the powerful "interests", which included Bay Street, the Toronto newspapers, the United States, and several other sets of assorted enemies. There was also evidence of a rural-urban split, for Diefenbaker loyalty remained strong on the prairies and in the Maritimes.

Lester Pearson and the Liberals won in 1963, but not decisively. He too got a minority government, at the head of which he would remain, through an election in 1965, for the next five years. It was suggested by the *Montreal Gazette* that the three minority governments in three elections, 1962, 1963, 1965, were the result of the

juxtaposition of the two leaders, Diefenbaker and Pearson, neither satisfactory: Diefenbaker, a wonderful campaigner with hardly a glimmer about policy; Pearson, richly endowed with good ideas but an abominable strategist.

In the long run, ideas are better. Pearson's legislative record is remarkable, and Diefenbaker's not. If ever there be wanting proof that minority governments can make substantial contributions to Canadian political and social legislation, all that is needed is the record of the Pearson government from 1963 to 1968. He never had an effective working majority; he was four short of it after the 1963 election, two short of it after the 1965 one.

Pearson had begun life as an academic, become a civil servant in External Affairs, and had come into politics by that back door. He was an easy man to like, much less easy to know; he had a lively sense of humour, often deprecatory about himself. If he took himself seriously, as Diefenbaker did, it was not obvious. His political style could be described as absence of style; at his best he was informal, casual, flexible; at his worst he was bumbling and mumbling. Some of his policy decisions and their legislative implementation were like a soap opera, *The Perils of Pearson*. Yet out of these shifts, changes, manoeuvres, perils, came a wealth of good legislation: in 1964-5, the Canada Pension Plan; in February 1965 after much debate, the Canadian flag was hoisted over Parliament Hill; later that year the Autopact was signed with the Americans; in 1967 Pearson's government, and others, contributed to a marvellously successful Expo '67 in Montreal.



Diefenbaker dominates the 24th Parliament. Cartoon by Peter Kuch.

Winnipeg Free Press

Pearson's most remarkable achievement was Medicare, something he had promised in 1963.

Saskatchewan had started Medicare under Premier Tommy Douglas in 1959, and it was brought into effect there on 1 July 1962 in the teeth of a strike of Saskatchewan doctors. That was eventually settled in the government's favour. Pearson needed the provinces' co-operation to effect Medicare and it was some time before they agreed to the terms of federal contribution of health care funds, 1968 in fact. By that time Pearson was out of office.

Diefenbaker reluctantly gave up being Conservative leader in September 1967, when a Conservative convention elected Robert Stanfield, a quiet, able, intelligent Nova Scotian as national leader. All that autumn of 1967 the Conservatives moved steadily ahead of the Liberals in the polls, and Pearson decided it was time to step down. He was 71 years old, his health was not robust, he had had a good year in 1967 and so in December announced his retirement. Liberals called a leadership convention for April 1968. In spite of the Conservative lead in the polls, there were many Liberals ready to be leader. Pearson thought the leader should be a French Canadian, and liked Jean Marchand. But Marchand knew his limits, and Pearson's preference then fell on Pierre Trudeau.

One of Pearson's coups in 1965 had been to persuade three young and vigorous French Canadians to run, and the "three wise men" joined the Cabinet: Jean Marchand, Gérard Pelletier, and Pierre Trudeau. Trudeau became Pearson's Parliamentary Secretary in January, 1966 and subsequently Minister of Justice. He spoke both languages fluently; on his feet in Parliament he was brisk, knowledgeable, authoritative. At the April 1968 convention he was in the lead from the start and stayed there. Trudeau seemed to have everything; he was 48 years old in 1968, unmarried, exceptionally vigorous and fit, educated at Montreal, Harvard, Paris and London and endowed with a razor-like mind; he could also play, effortlessly, publicly, with style and panache. He was also a convinced and articulate federalist from a province where strong federalists were neither as strong or as many as they used to be.

Trudeau called a general election almost at once, and it was unlike anything the country had seen so far. For one thing it followed the Canadian triumph of Expo '67, when everything succeeded; Trudeau was part of it, a master of plaza politicking and charm, and yet tough, in two languages. When some demonstrators attempted to break up the St. Jean Baptiste Day parade in Montreal on 24 June, the day before the election, all of Canada watched on TV as Trudeau sat unflinching on the reviewing stand as bottles whizzed by his head, while others fled in disorder. With pretty girls in persimmon-coloured dresses (from one of the best designers in

Montreal) acting as his adoring escort, Canada, East and West, fell for him and it. Trudeau carried British Columbia with a clear majority, and took 155 seats across Canada, the Conservatives getting only 72, their worst performance since 1953.

Trudeau was a leader that other countries envied Canada for. "In 1968", as Richard Gwyn puts it, "we invested part of our national psyche in Trudeau. Although many times he has disappointed us, offended us, enraged us, we've never really wanted to take back our investment. We can't think of anyone else who might, one day, bring back the magical flame." Trudeau insisted — it was almost his only insistence — on giving French Canadians a strong sense that they also belonged within the Canadian federal system, that Ottawa was their government as much as Quebec City was, and that it should be accessible to them in French as well as English.

The Official Languages Act was passed in 1969, implementing the main recommendations of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, that had been established in the Pearson years. All Canadians had the right to communicate with the federal government in French or English, and all federal civil servants could choose to work in either. There were other elements in the Act, that made it easy to misrepresent. It was obvious that the Government wanted its civil servants, both inside and outside Ottawa, bilingual if possible. A commission was established to oversee the process of helping to make them so, filled with what one French-Canadian minister called "bilingual revolutionaries", idealists, and like many such, apt to be ruthless. Bilingualism is not easy. It was not easy getting aging anglophones to wrap unused muscles around the French "u". Trudeau knew that only so much could be accomplished in the short term; he had his eye on the long term, a generation away perhaps, when young English Canadians would have learned to speak French. The government encouraged this, and one long-term result has been, indeed, a marked development in French immersion schools in such unlikely bilingual places as Vancouver, Calgary, London, and Halifax.

As this development shaped and grew, so did its obverse; French-Canadian consciousness of themselves and of Quebec, and the political concomitant of both, separatism. The context is more important than the ideology. Almost from the beginning of French settlement in the seventeenth century, French Canadians had been noted for their pride, *élan*, independence. Old France found them restive enough to govern; from time to time governors from France and others would note that French Canadians were big for their boots. Under the British they developed an identity quite their own, thrown into sharp relief by the rebellions of 1837 and 1838. After Confederation it was symbolized by



Pierre Trudeau: "... exceptionally vigorous and fit, educated at Montreal, Harvard, Paris and London and endowed with a razor-like mind; he could also play, effortlessly, publicly, with style and panache." Above: Buckingham Palace, May 1977.

Fréchette's poem, "Le Drapeau Anglais", of the 1880s: the Union Jack stood for prosperity and freedom, things French Canadians could respect, but the old French flag! Ah, that was something else; the fleur-de-lis caught at one's heart. Thus, too, the first lines of *O Canada*, also of the 1880s,

O Canada, terre de nos aïeux,
Ton front est ceint de fleurons glorieux!

French Canadians had been confident, once, that they could match the battle of demography against the English, for their weapon was *la revanche du berceau*, the revenge of the cradles, a very high birth rate, based on early marriages and prolific families. English Canadians were not devoid of these either, but mainly it was immigration that gave them such a decided edge in numbers. Until Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949, Quebec had the highest birth rate in Canada, then the second highest. But in the 1960s and 1970s Quebec's birth rate dropped, steeply, suddenly, and permanently. Two things that reinforced each other were responsible: the falling off of the power of the Roman Catholic religion from a daily faith to a Sunday one; far more dangerous was *la pillule*, the birth-control pill.

Thus demography, very much an academic speciality

in French Canada, turned against French Canadians at the very time when TV, especially English-Canadian and American TV, was assuming a powerful hegemony. Alarms were rung; they could not change the low birth-rate, but they did make French Canadians acutely aware of threats to their cultural world and, even more, to their language. They, their life, like language, were like a beleaguered island, surrounded by a vast sea of English. Thus it was not just the English Canadians, but those other English, the 220 million or more Americans, who threatened, not by intending to but simply by the power and pervasiveness of their culture. All of it came on inexorably in English. Of course there was French-Canadian TV, and very good it was and is, but how could one fight that enormous pressure of that Englishness, from Corn Flakes to cars, or the beguiling entertainment pouring out, unstoppable, from every outlet known to modern communications?

This was the social context of separatism, and which gave it its force. Far from being aggressive, separatism was fundamentally defensive, though at times it took on the appearance of aggression. Bill 101 of 1977, brought in by the Parti Québécois government of René Lévesque, an old friend and debating companion of Trudeau's, was designed specifically for the protection of French

language and institutions. It worked some hardship on Quebec minorities, Greek, Italian, to say nothing of anglophones. French, thus, made its way, helped also by Ottawa, and became an established vehicle there. The Official Languages Act worked, in short. But the threats to French-Canadian culture never ended. On 20 May 1980, a Quebec referendum posed, and answered, the question of separatism, for the time being at least: 60% of Quebecers said no to it. But of that 60% a clear proportion were immigrants or English. French Canadians themselves divided almost evenly in the 1980 referendum.

So it has remained, roughly, since, through the repatriation of the Canadian constitution in 1981-2. Trudeau engineered that, having been prime minister 1968-1979, and 1980 to 1984 when he finally stepped down as leader. A general election that year brought the Conservatives back to power, led by a bilingual Quebec anglophone, Brian Mulroney. His victory matched in decisiveness that of Diefenbaker in 1958, 211 Tories to 40 Liberals and 30 New Democrats. Mulroney struggled to replace the old loyalty of Quebec to the Liberals with a new one to the Conservatives. Bringing Quebec into the constitution, which Trudeau had failed to do, was tried at Meech Lake in 1987 and at Charlottetown in 1990. Both failed by narrow margins, and gave a fillip to separatism. By that time a Free Trade Agreement with the Americans had changed some benchmarks; Quebec nationalism was partly diverted into entrepreneurial enterprises, and overall it won for the Conservatives a renewed majority that would last until 1993.

The issue of separatism is still open; a separate French-Canadian sense of themselves will always be there, from language, history and the three centuries of both. Their first love is Quebec; Ottawa, and Canada, is a *mariage de convenance*. It need not be less valued for that. Quebec is not a province like the others, and never was. But its best interest, rationally considered, almost certainly lies in its remaining the substantial part of the Canadian polity that is now, though concessions may be needed to recognize its differentness. Canadians, French and English, can never escape each other. As Desmond Morton argued recently,

Forty years of affluence taught Canadians tolerance ... that most necessary of civic virtues ... All that Canadians really needed to learn from their history was tolerance, that and a sense of the continuity of life in a great and generous land. ♦

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Quote Unquote

He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

— **Psalms, 72nd, verse 8**

I have no great faith in him as a politician: he is too honest a man!

— **William Dunlop**

Why is it that when people have no capacity for private usefulness they should be so anxious to serve the public?

— **Sara Jeannette Duncan**

Generally speaking people think all politicians are crooked. But if they were, they wouldn't go into politics. They could make more money as crooks.

— **Judy LaMarsh**

If public life is the noblest of all callings, it is the vilest of all trades.

— **Goldwin Smith**

For us, sons of France, political sentiment is a passion; while, for the Englishmen, politics are a question of business.

— **Wilfrid Laurier**

Politics is war.

— **W.A.C. Bennett**

If there's one thing I've learned from W.A.C. Bennett, it's how to kill. The time to hit a politician is when he's down.

— **Dave Barrett**

At the heart of all governments there is chaos.

— **A.R.M. Lower**

There are only two kinds of government — the scarcely tolerable and the absolutely unbearable.

— **J.W. Daffoe**

Canada is a hard country to govern.

— **John A. Macdonald**

In Canada you are reminded of the government every day. It parades itself before you. It is not content to be the servant, but will be the master; and every day it goes out to the Plains of Abraham or to the Champ de Mars and exhibits itself and its tools.

— **Henry David Thoreau**

Daughters of the True North 1900 - 1995

By Veronica Strong-Boag

In 1900 *Women of Canada: Their Life and Work*, a book compiled for the Paris International Exhibition by members of the National Council of Women of Canada, sounded a note of cautious optimism. In the twentieth century Canadian women were, according to the Council's founder, Ishbel Gordon, Lady Aberdeen, enjoying "happiness, freedom and richness of opportunity". Women of diverse European origins were identified as active participants in nation-building. First Nations women, especially the Iroquois, represented in the volume by author and poet E. Pauline Johnson, were also accorded a respectable place in the new nation. For a few contributors, the better world they saw coming into being also included, if only occasionally, other "racial" minorities, such as one anonymous black woman entrepreneur who employed "over one hundred and fifty men, owns several large ice houses and eight or ten teams." Yet, if differences were at times admitted, and occasionally celebrated, the authors of *Women of Canada* generally believed that women shared a common maternalism which made them especially altruistic, spiritual and industrious. Such qualities would, it was assumed, win out against the reactionary forces which aimed to deny women their fair share in the future. To be sure, the 442-page volume also testified to the vestiges of less progressive times: no woman had the provincial or federal franchise, many women were sexually exploited, destitution was a major problem destroying lives of young and old alike, significant legal disabilities burdened wives, and women were still effectively barred from many employments. Overall, however, contributors foresaw the new century as one



National Gallery of Canada

Gustav Hahn: "Hail Dominion!" 1906.

of steady advance toward women's full emancipation and the creation of a more just world.

Today, near the end of the twentieth century, it is instructive to compare *Women of Canada* with *Work in Progress: Tracking Women's Equality in Canada* published by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women in June 1994. The latter report assesses Canada's progress in meeting international obligations, set out in the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (adopted by the U.N. in 1979 and ratified by Canada in 1981) and the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (adopted in 1985). Important advances are identified, including some of the work of the 1993 Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies and of the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women (1993), the repeal of the federal abortion law, the creation of five research centres on family violence, federal funding of regional women's studies



National Film Board

Opportunities for education have gradually opened to Canadian women over the century, but progress has been uncertain.

chairs in universities, and the implementation of new guidelines on gender-related persecution by the Immigration and Refugee Board.

Setbacks are at least as numerous: the abandonment in 1992 of a much-promised national child-care strategy, the cancellation of the Court Challenges Programme, budget cuts to the federal Women's Programme and reductions in the Unemployment Insurance programme which have injured women, some 52% of all citizens, in particular. As *Work in Progress* notes, the situation facing "poor women, racial minority women, aboriginal women, and women with disabilities" is especially desperate. Disturbing conclusions are summed up by Canada's drop from eighth out of 33 countries in 1992 to ninth out of 43 in 1994, as measured by the U.N.'s annual Human Development Index, which maps countries on "Quality of Life" measures. A comparison of the situation in 1900 and 1994 suggests that, while much has changed, much remains to be done on the long hard road to equality and justice.

Women of Canada and *Work in Progress* provide good starting points for an evaluation of women's experience in the twentieth century. The remainder of this article develops the comparison between these two documents and then examines various aspects of women's lives over the intervening decades. Nearly a hundred years of progress and resistance to what Nellie McClung, Canada's best-known suffragist and author of *In Times Like These* (1917) called "a fair deal for all" are briefly charted with regard, in particular, to issues of sexuality and reproduction, education, unpaid and paid work, marriage and family life, cultures and politics.

Women's Voices in 1900 and 1994

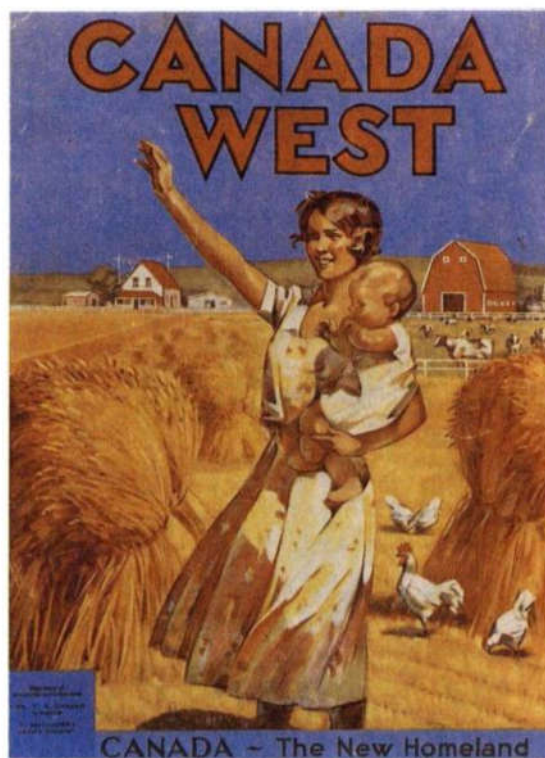
At the beginning of the century, the National Council of Women was the Dominion's leading women's organization, only challenged occasionally by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), which avoided the broad interests of the Council to focus abundant energies on alcohol and the abuse of women and children. In its non-partisan and non-denominational principles, the NCWC, like the International Council of Women (ICW) of which it was a member, embodied the nineteenth-century liberalism of John Stuart Mill, Wilfrid Laurier, and the founding president of both the NCWC and the ICW, the charismatic feminist leader later celebrated as the "grandmother of the League of Nations", Lady Aberdeen.

The NCWC's controversial attempt to create a national community of women which ignored the bitter divisions among European peoples, especially the French and the English, and those among Protestants, Catholics, and Jews placed it to the forefront of many progressive organizations of its day. Its members' inability, for the most part, to extend their efforts at understanding beyond the urban middle class and those of European origin or "the white race", ultimately, however, limited its effectiveness. One or both shortcomings have beset most women's organizations, including the NCWC's Quebec equivalent, the Fédération nationale St. Jean Baptiste, throughout this century. As the creation of the Fédération in 1907 suggested too, good intentions were also finally insufficient to prevent the separate development of French and English-speaking feminism. As the standard texts, *Canadian Women: A History* (1988) and *L'Histoire des femmes au Québec* (1993) amply demonstrate, nationalist divisions flourished from the onset of both movements.

Until the creation of the federal Women's Bureau in 1954 and, still more, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women's Bureau in 1973, Ottawa had no significant research capacity on one-half of its citizens. Not surprisingly, when the NCWC petitioned in 1898 for proper recognition for Canadian women at the International Exhibition, the federal government turned the job over to the petitioners. Months of voluntary



*The dream and the reality: Immigrant woman and child, Saskatchewan 1903 (left) by their sod house.
Cover from an immigration brochure (right) shows the ideal.*



labour and lifetimes of commitment to improving women's lives by activists like St. John's Frances Murray, Toronto's Mary Dignam, Montreal's Carrie Derick and Marie Gérin-Lajoie, and Brandon's Jessie McEwen, lay behind entries such as "legal and political status", "trades and industries", "French education", "art, handicrafts, music and the drama", "church work", "immigration", and "Indian women". Contributors represented an elite which remained, for the greater part, resolutely north-eurocentric. First Nations peoples like the Iroquois were admitted as equals inasmuch as they conformed to preferred ideals of industry, sobriety, and initiative.

Largely missing from consideration and inclusion were peoples originating from southern and eastern Europe, Africa, Asia, and South America. Their numbers were still small as a proportion of the overall population, except notably in British Columbia where residents of Asian origin amounted to 10.9% in 1901. For the most part, the nation's incipient diversity, which had in fact been evident as far back as New France, remained largely unacknowledged and unwanted by the dominant Euro-Canadian community. For the nineteenth and indeed well into the twentieth century, the critical issues of race were overwhelmingly, as the preoccupation with separate schools suggests, those firstly

between French and English and latterly between the two "founding peoples" and immigrants from southern and eastern Europe who began to arrive in significant numbers in the 1890s.

Like the vast majority of their male contemporaries, NCWC feminists also took the privileges of class largely for granted. As Joan Sangster has suggested in *Dreams of Equality: Women on the Canadian Left, 1920-1950* (1989), criticisms stemming from the nation's fledgling socialist movements engaged few women and fewer feminists. NCWC leaders sharing much with the nation's male elites, could finally afford to be optimistic. Despite recurring misogynous blasts from prominent anti-feminists like Goldwin Smith, Henri Bourassa, and Stephen Leacock, NCWCers believed they were riding the full tide of triumphant British liberalism which would inevitably bring formal justice and equality. Like feudalism, male privilege was doomed by the momentum of history itself.

By 1994 the woman's movement and its offspring, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women and its provincial counterparts, are both more diverse and less sanguine. They too are a product of their times. Liberalism's fortunes have been struck severe blows: *inter alia*, two world wars, the Holocaust, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, recurring world-wide tribal-



Suffragists at Nellie McClung's home in Edmonton. From right to left on the first step: Emily Murphy, Emmaline Pankhurst, Nellie McClung.

ism, and environmental disasters from Chernobyl to the *Exxon Valdez*. In ways that Laurier had not foreseen, the twentieth century did indeed turn out to be Canada's. Here is no "fireproof" house as was hoped in the 1930s, but a nation swept by much of the turmoil that has damaged less economically favoured nations. Immigration from southern Europe, Asia, the Caribbean, Africa and South America has confirmed a diverse heritage which struggles for political and cultural legitimacy. Efforts at inclusiveness struggle against the racism which dates to the bitter history of white-aboriginal contact and from the appalling early treatment of Africans and Asians by Europeans in British Columbia and Nova Scotia. Only slowly has an overwhelmingly white and middle-class women's movement acknowledged its own politics of race and class. Lesbian challenges to heterosexual privilege have also necessitated further hard lessons. In the meantime too, the late twentieth century provides abundant evidence that the Québécoises continue to articulate a distinctive agenda. *Work in Progress* represents the evolving and struggling condition of a modern nation's feminist forces. Unprecedented awareness of the costs of racism, homophobia, and prejudice in general against those not in the main/malestream increasingly informs

many feminists' understanding of Canada. The volume's designated "priority issues", including the economy, employment, poverty and housing, work and families, violence and safety, women with disabilities, aboriginal women, racial minority women, the environment and peace capture the spirit of a movement which is, as in 1900, in the vanguard of human progress.

Sexuality and Reproduction

Given the hard reality of indicators like a wage gap between full-time, full-year employed women and men, which stood at 63.7% in 1981 and 69.6% in 1991, and the proportion of Canadian women who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence, 51% in 1993, optimism is clearly out of place. Such facts, together with the reality of a right-wing backlash in the 1980s and 1990s, which blames women for society's failings, have required the appearance of a tougher minded, more realistic, and ultimately more inclusive Canadian feminism than was represented by *Women of Canada*. Ultimately, the shift from 1900 to 1994 reflects the changes which characterize women's lives in the intervening decades.

Although they might not have known the precise names for parts of the human body, Victorian women

were neither passionless nor unconcerned by the politics of sexual relations. Diaries and letters tell of intimacy and pleasure. They also tell of efforts at control. Although, as Angus and Arlene Tigar McLaren have documented in *The Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880-1980* (1986), a variety of forms of birth control were already reducing the birth rate from previous highs, sexual activity for women remained closely tied to reproduction. To be sure, some

guished Canada. The fact that women suffered so disproportionately from sexuality's costs informed courting and marital relationships and female activism. The WCTU and the NCWC were, like many women's organizations, eager to rescue children and adults from sexual predators. Unfortunately, the maternity homes and shelters they created often further stigmatized victims and entailed social control as well as assistance. Until the introduction of the birth control pill and more liberal standards in the 1960s, "respectable" or smart



Manitoba Archives, L.B. Foote Collection

Nurses and babies, Grace Hospital, Winnipeg, 1914.

women formed intense relationships with others of their sex. For most, however, sexuality represented a potential pleasure that might well bring the pain of unwanted pregnancies. Not only were children becoming more of an expense and less of an economic asset as the country became more urbanized, but death, not to mention disability, in childbirth remained common until the appearance of sulfa drugs in the late 1930s.

Desperate attempts to control fertility underlay abortions and, too often, resulting deaths throughout much of the century. Vast regional and class differences in the availability of safe birth control methods always distin-

girls waited for marriage and the "disreputable" or unlucky were directed to charitable institutions, such as that run by Montreal's Sisters of Misericordia described by Andrée Levesque in *La Norme et les déviantes. Des femmes au Québec pendant l'entre-deux-guerres* (1989).

For all its dangers, sexuality remained, as Karen Dubinsky has demonstrated in *Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Conflict in Ontario 1880-1929* (1993) a source of potential pleasure and power that women were reluctant to surrender. Dance halls and a host of similar entertainments, not to mention popular



Manitoba Archives, L.B. Foote Collection

Indian mother and child, Northern Manitoba, 1915.

fiction and film, celebrated female attractions throughout the century. Even so, young women, caught up in the prevailing view shared by Canadians of many different backgrounds that women were better innocent than knowledgeable, have often been dangerously ignorant about their own bodies. Such ignorance did nothing to empower them in heterosexual relations, but that, of course, was at least partially the point. Not surprisingly, feminists regularly proposed strong doses of sex education. The popularity of the instant classic, *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (1973) published by the Boston Women's Health Collective through many editions in the last quarter of the century, was preceded by advice from both international birth controllers like Marie Stopes and Margaret Sanger and Canadians like Hamilton's Dr. Elizabeth Bagshaw. The result has been women's growing knowledge about the power over their own sexuality.

In the first three quarters of the century loss of respectability and venereal disease were clear penalties for sexual experimentation. By the 1980s the deterrent began to include AIDS, which, more than other sexually transmitted diseases, promised to bring the sexual revolution to an abrupt halt. The need for "safe sex" prompted renewed struggles over sexual standards. Conservatives reiterated that safety lay in ignorance: no sex education. Progressives turned to fighting AIDS with groups such as British Columbia's Positive

Women and more effective educational programmes for children and adults alike. Whatever the response, sexuality at the end of the century remains a battlefield for many Canadians.

When children were desired, mothering has long been considered one of women's most cherished roles. Whether naturally or induced by a barrage of expectations from family, church, and, increasingly, the media, girls and women looked to babies and children as critical affirmations of normality. Such feeling informed not only births but adoptions and, increasingly in the 1980s and 1990s, the resort to reproductive technologies which promise, at least to the lucky few, perfect babies.

The desire for perfect offspring is nothing new. Canadian mothers have received solicited and unsolicited advice from clergymen, doctors, teachers and social workers for many years. "Little Blue Books" full of helpful hints on everything from childbirth to weaning and nutrition began in the 1920s, the first in a long line of advice literature from federal and provincial governments. Child study centres, domestic science classes, and real-life models like the Dionne Quintuplets have provided female Canadians with a host of strategies for mothering. Choice has been deeply influenced by the particularities of the nation's various cultures. Potential mothers in communities as diverse as the Sikhs, Inuit, Mennonite, and B.C.'s Gulf Islands' counterculture develop different mixes of mothering behaviours. Freedom to choose among different options has, however, been increasingly curtailed both by the pressures of mass culture and by the standards on respectable parenting set by child welfare agencies. While many children have been saved from difficult or dreadful family circumstances, agencies have sometimes been far too ready to impose middle-class expectations on other types of families. Recurring scandals surrounding the state's apprehension of aboriginal children suggest a need to reconsider how good parenting can be supported within different types of communities.

Education

At first glance, the twentieth century seems to represent the triumph of co-education. The generation who wrote *Women of Canada* had fought a long battle for educational rights. Since Canadians, except for the wealthy, were generally not willing or able to afford equality in separate institutions, co-education has marked publicly funded school systems. Equality was, however, always somewhat illusory, and all the more so as you moved up the educational hierarchy. Right from the beginning girls and boys, not to mention those of different backgrounds and abilities, might very well be registered in different classes and institutions. Working class, First Nations, and minority group youngsters were regularly directed to training in both residential and day schools that prepared them for low-

paying and low status jobs such as domestic service. Carrier girls at British Columbia's Residential School, like those attending industrial schools for female delinquents across the country and the segregated black schools of southern Ontario, never received anything like equality. It is hardly any wonder that many children and their parents have resisted the incursion of compulsory schooling and treasured their own traditions. For many years curriculum and texts routinely celebrated white, male, and middle-class children. The American *Dick and Jane* reading series, widely used into the 1960s, was preoccupied with the energetic Dick. Other types of children were accorded little space. Sports programmes similarly targeted the privileged. Women's opportunities for team sports, while promising in the 1920s with groups such as the champion basketballers, the Edmonton Grads, looked much worse in the 1950s when cheerleading seemed much more in fashion. In the 1960s and 1970s challenges to such lop-sided attention slowly appeared. By the end of the century funds and coaching were a more common experience for elementary and secondary school girls.

The needs of a post-industrial economy, reliant, as Graham Lowe tells us in *Women in the Administrative Revolution* (1987), on highly skilled white-collar service workers, encouraged an expansion of clerical and secretarial training in the first two thirds of the century. Commercial classes attracted talented working and middle-class youngsters, in ways much like the nursing schools which proliferated over the same decades. With

the major expansion of post-secondary education in the 1960s and subsequently, such training has been, however, increasingly rejected by the middle class who aspired to professions for their daughters. The coming of computers also transformed workplaces so that clerical and secretarial education no longer seems a guarantee of secure employment.

Universities have only recently accommodated even middle-class women. The battle to enter their programmes, which began in the 1850s, was far from won in 1900. A generation of suffragists had encountered early opponents in education's bloody arenas. Many courses, not to mention scholarships (the Rhodes being only the most notorious), remained effectively barred to women for much of the century. Progress was uncertain: in 1920 women represented 16.3% of Canada's full-time undergraduate students and 25.5% of graduates, by 1940 the figures were 23.3% and 20.8, and by 1960, 24.8% and 15.1%. Scholarly prizes did not improve reception as the feminist Marie Gérin-Lajoie's daughter discovered when she took first place among all those examined by the University of Montréal in 1916, only to be publicly ignored. Discrimination was confirmed by Quebec's refusal to subsidize classical colleges for girls until 1961; boys received support from 1922.

The story of medical education is similarly instructive. The first period, from the 1850s to the 1880s, saw pioneers taking classes in Canadian medical schools and passing professional exams. The second period,



Edmonton Grads, 1940, at the end of a long golden age of championship play on the basketball courts. The era of cheerleading was dawning.

1883 to 1906, saw the emergence of two women's medical colleges, at Kingston and Toronto, and the first co-educational programmes at schools such as Dalhousie and Manitoba. The third period, 1906 to the 1960s, brought the disappearance of formal bars to female participation, women's entry to all medical schools, and an emphasis on competing on male terms. The final period, during the last decades of the century, saw women, encouraged by feminism's revival, make up about half of Canada's medical students. Rising concerns for women's health, in everything from rape to arthritis, reflected medicine's new personnel. The transformation of medicine is one part of the change which saw women reach 52.6% of Canada's full-time undergraduates and 41.5% of full-time graduate students in 1990-1. While many women remained ghettoized in so-called female areas, like nursing, library science, and the humanities, large numbers in medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, and law are challenging male preserves. Some programmes such as applied science have been much slower to change but, especially after the 1989 massacre of female engineering students at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique, resistance appears in decline.

At least as important as the numerical shift has been the increasing use of post-secondary institutions by older students, many of whom have been women endeavouring to combine part-time study with home responsibilities and, sometimes, with paid work as well. A few brave souls began the trek back to schools in the 1950s, but by the 1970s it had become a stampede as women sought greater economic opportunities and intellectual nourishment. The growing presence of mature students has fundamentally shifted the demographics of many universities, forcing many to alter programs and services.

The so-called feminization of Canadian universities, especially at undergraduate levels, has won mixed reviews. Some critics lament the loss of what was effectively elite male training, claiming a decline in standards. Efforts to rethink curriculum and pedagogy, as with introduction of women's studies and sexual harassment and anti-discrimination policies, are pilloried by neo-conservatives jealous of their prerogatives. Yet, although, as Anne Innis Dagg and Patricia Thompson argue in *MisEducation: Women and Canadian Universities* (1988), the battle waged for educational equality is not yet fully won, life has slowly improved on many campuses.

It is, however, an ironical comment on the value of co-education that with its near-triumph, feminists are also reconsidering its value. Research now suggests that girls may well do better in all aspects of schooling, from scholarship, to sports, and politics, when they have a good dose of high quality, same-sex education. That it seems is the best antidote to the persistence of

educational practices which take men as the measure. The same process of reconsideration is also going on among many cultural groups who are seeking to empower children both through curriculum revisions, including anti-racist programming, that more accurately reflect their presence in Canada, and through new schooling initiatives such as Vancouver Sikhs' Khalsa elementary school.

Unpaid and Paid Work

Women worked in and out of the home in 1900 and 1994. The intervening decades saw continuity and shifts in both spheres of activity. Domestic labour has remained largely women's responsibility, both paid and unpaid. Household service, like agricultural labour, has been the preserve of the most vulnerable sectors of the population, the young, the old, the immigrants, and visible minorities. Federal domestic worker programmes have particularly targeted black Caribbean and Philippine women for jobs whose status and pay more fortunate Canadians have been determined to refuse. Despite imported workers and unmet demand, most women have continued to seek alternate employment. Significant, although ultimately limited, opportunities for independence came with jobs as factory hands, fish packers, secretaries, bookkeepers, nurses, and teachers. Wherever they worked women generally experienced lesser pay and opportunity than similarly trained men.

By the 1920s it had come to be taken largely for granted that many young women would work outside the home before marriage. Even the backlash against female wage-earners which surfaced during the 1930s, when they were likely to be blamed for male unemployment, did not alter this fundamental shift. In all decades job security, and options in general, were significantly less available for minority group women. Well-qualified Japanese-Canadian graduates of nursing programmes, for example, found great difficulty in securing jobs before the 1950s. Vancouver's department stores have not been alone in refusing to hire First Nations candidates until relatively late in the century. Nova Scotia's black citizens found few options beyond domestic labour.

For the first half of the century, most women quit paid labour upon marriage, only to re-enter if financial adversity struck. Wartime labour shortages, in 1914-18 and 1939-45, saw married women flooding into employment for both patriotic and pragmatic motives. In *They're Still Women After All: the Second World War and Canadian Womanhood* (1986), Ruth Roach Pierson describes the taxation and labour force strategies designed to return female workers home, when war's emergency passed. Active discouragement and the post-war prosperity, which boosted men's pay cheques, took some women out of paid jobs but many continued to need wages. Wherever employed, women

were rarely considered for senior positions, even when they were numerically dominant, as in teaching.

Not until much later, however, were wives conceded to have employment rights equal, or at least nearly so, to their husbands and single women. The late 1940s and 1950s also initiated a pattern where women increasingly worked outside the home until the birth of children and then returned when offspring were school age or older. In the 1950s two pay cheques became increasingly critical in supporting family aspirations for a better life. By the last quarter of the century the pattern is shifting again with female labour force participation showing much greater continuity; childbirth and

In two world wars women kept the factories producing on the "home front". Here they make munitions in Quebec, 1915.

childraising are likely to occasion only relatively brief departures from paid labour.

By 1981 more than one half of wives worked outside the home and 60% of female workers were wives. By 1991 62.9% of women with children under age 16 were employed. This fundamental shift was reflected in a 1986 national poll in which a majority of Canadians supported both pay equity laws and daycare. The prominence of well-paid professional women by the end of the century represents undeniable progress but much remains to be done if the poverty rate for lone mothers under age 65 with children under age 18 is to fall below 61.9% (1991). Many women remain stuck with pay and opportunities far less than similarly educated men. The computer "revolution" of the 1980s and 1990s adds further to uncertainty as long-standing jobs in clerical and service employments are threatened. Fortunately for the future, raising levels of female unionization such as that among nurses and civil servants mean that some women are better positioned to confront the substantial wage gap between the sexes.

The other notable gap lay in women's and men's unequal responsibility for household labour. For much of the century, women have been held accountable for all manner of domestic tasks. Market place contributions have been viewed as largely conditional on housecleaning, childrearing and marital harmony. Even arduous paid work and responsibility of the family's standard of living rarely released women. A few privileged women have been able to hire domestic substitutes, but far more important has been new domestic technologies such as broadloom and linoleum, clothes washers and vacuum cleaners, processed foods and ready-to-wear apparel, which for all their tendency to heighten standards, have brought some abatement of chores. By the end of the century, evidence suggests that childless couples often manage to negotiate relatively equitable divi-



sion of domestic labour. The arrival of children seems, however, to add disproportionately to women's work. The existence of this inequity contributes significantly to marital disharmony and women's fatigue.

Family Life

Families have always proved sites of negotiation, as women and men, children and adults struggle to communicate desires and promote beneficial outcomes. Diaries, autobiographies, letters, and oral evidence suggest that women have placed great importance on their roles as wives and mothers. The maintenance of rituals, in everything from Christmas celebrations, to Jewish bar and bat mitzvahs, and Hinduism's Festival of Lights, have been women's special delight and frustration. Family satisfactions provide important compensations. The century's falling birthrates, interrupted only briefly after the Second World War, have meant that women have concentrated on fewer offspring, whose emotional as well as physical well-being have been considered their over-riding responsibility. Family relation-

ships have attracted attention from clergy, doctors, psychologists, social workers, and politicians. For much of the century, such experts have energetically promoted the breadwinner nuclear family, in which women bear responsibility for the home and men for wage-earning. Nor have women themselves, in the club movement or as social service and health care professionals, been above blaming others for inadequate mothering. Canadian psychologist Paula Caplan's *Don't Blame Mother; Mending the Mother-Daughter Relationship* (1989) has outlined the limits of such criticism.

Non-conforming women have been regularly censured for everything from juvenile delinquency to divorce and child abuse. Poorer families, especially those among visible minority populations, have been especially likely to be penalized for their inability to meet middle-class standards of behaviour. Reformatories, residential schools, and foster homes, like St. John's notorious Mount Cashel Orphanage and Vancouver's Girls' Industrial Schools have been only too likely to house their children.

Given women's special responsibilities for family maintenance, marriage's inequities have attracted considerable attention. The prevalence of male violence spurred the WCTU to seek prohibition. In 1911 the NCWC and other women's groups supported Angelina Napolitano, an Italian immigrant who killed her husband when he tried to prostitute her. In the early decades of the century women's columns in newspapers like the *Grain Growers' Guide*, as well as feminist periodicals like B.C.'s *The Champion*, and Ontario's *Woman's Century* regularly criticized the failure of laws to protect wives, mothers, and daughters. Inequity in guardianship of children, inheritance, and divorce allowed women significantly less freedom than male relatives. The 1869 exclusion of Indian women from legal Indian status when they married non-Indians, which persisted until 1985, was one obvious indicator of unequal treatment. By the end of the century, appalling evidence of wife assault, which spared no community (in 1993 this included 36% of married or formerly married women in B.C., 34% in Alberta, 32% in Nova Scotia, 30% in Manitoba, 29% in Ontario, 28% in Saskatchewan, 26% in New Brunswick, 25% in P.E.I., 25% in Quebec and 17% in Newfoundland) has again underscored the urgent need for reform.

Alberta's passage in 1910 of the Married Women's Relief Act, which gave wives at least a limited claim to a portion of husbands' estates, like the liberalization of divorce laws in 1969, was part of a slow process of redress. In 1970 the *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women* was, however, still able to point to numerous discrepancies between the idealization of women within the family and the reality of unjust treatment. The transition houses later founded by feminists

which offered sanctuary in communities across the country spoke to the need to confront the shortcoming of Canadian families. By the end of the century, family life is being reappraised on a number of fronts. Governments are being asked to design policies for the reality of wage-earning wives, female-headed households, and multiple family styles. New recognition of the continuing presence of same-sex couples has also fuelled demands for an enlargement of the very definition of a family. These developments have been strongly opposed by the country's religious right but they reflect the reality of family life at the close of the twentieth century.

Cultures and Politics

Throughout Canada's numerous communities, women have provided the mainstay of traditions, particularly those focussed on kin groups. As so-called "folk" or popular artists, they have also created a significant material heritage through their weaving, knitting, needlework, and handicrafts in general. Groups such as the Woman's Art Association of Canada (founded 1890) opened up new opportunities with lectures, studio space, and exhibitions. Such initiatives were significant when art training and employment were rarely offered to girls on the same basis as their brothers. The Royal Canadian Academy of Arts (founded 1879), for example, initially only admitted women as associate members. Despite such discouragement women were eager interpreters of their surroundings. By 1908, Emily Carr was sketching in Alaska and Alert Bay, doing for the West Coast what the Group of Seven would later do for Georgian Bay and Algonquin Park. The First World War gave female sculptors their first opportunity to compete as equals for large public commissions. In 1918 Ottawa chose Frances Loring and Florence Wyle to create bronze statuettes saluting Canadian munitions workers.

In the interwar years women made considerable progress, dominating the Sculptors Society of Canada (founded 1928), proving active contributors to the Canadian Group of Painters and the Contemporary Arts Society, and founding the New Play Society. During the Second World War women like Lieutenant Molly Lamb Bobak, the sole female official war artist with military rank, and others like Pegi Nicol MacLeod and Paraskeva Clark, commissioned by the National Gallery to record women's war service, strengthened recognition of female artists. On other fronts, Ethel Stark founded the Montreal Women's Symphony in 1940. As curators and directors in the mid-years of the century, women like Celia Franca and Dora Mavor Moore encouraged acceptance of modern art, ballet, and avant-garde theatre. Directors like Sandy Wilson (*My American Cousin*, 1985) and Anne Wheeler (*Bye Bye Blues*, 1989) have made powerful statements about

contemporary Canada. While other visual artists like Joyce Wieland and Maryon Kantaroff made major contributions after the Second World War, writers have been at the forefront of Canadian culture.

Literature has always had strong representation from women. Best-selling authors such as Nellie McClung (*Sowing Seeds in Danny*, 1908) and Lucy Maud Montgomery (*Anne of Green Gables*, 1908) have had many successors. More unusual were the poems and Indian legends published by E. Pauline Johnson (*Flint and Feather*, 1912, *Legends of Vancouver*, 1911) which incorporated the history of the First Nations. A concern for social justice has regularly marked authors like poet Dorothy Livesay who in the 1930s took up the cause of the poor. Contemporary "Canadian Lit" has very much been the creation of authors like Gabrielle Roy, Marie-Claire Blais, Anne Hébert, Margaret Atwood, Margaret Laurence, Alice Munro, Daphne Marlett, and Bronwen Wallace. The country and western singer, k.d. lang, is also attracting attention as a multi-talented lesbian artist. By the close of the century Canada's long-standing diversity is finding strong voices in Lee Maracle, Jeannette Armstrong, Sky Lee, and Marlene Nourbese Philip. In the 1980s and 1990s passionate debates about racism and appropriation have rocked groups like Toronto's Women's Press and the Writers' Union of Canada as they grapple with how to express Canadian reality.

Women's politics has often been nourished by female culture. The first woman's movement conscientiously sponsored improved opportunities for art, literature, theatre, and music. Those like artist-activist Henrietta Muir Edwards of Montreal, Ottawa, and McLeod, Alberta, made self-conscious connections between creativity and equality. As I point out in my book *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Women in English Canada 1919-1939* (1988), the first elected female politicians often drew on their experience in female organizations. In the 1930s and 1940s CCFer Laura Jamieson of Vancouver was typical in connecting internationalism in art and music with international co-operation in general. The Voice of Women (founded 1960) like its predecessor, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (founded 1915), saw peace-making as a logical expression of long-standing female concerns for culture and co-operation.

The long struggle for federal and provincial suffrage, which was partially achieved between 1915 and 1940 and only universally won after the Second World War with the enfranchisement of the many First Nations and the Asian-Canadian women who had previously been excluded, like the recognition of women "as persons" in 1929, reveals the depth of opposition to bringing women fully into political life. Despite the support of women's organizations, pioneering politicians like the



Pauline Johnson, poet of the young Dominion.

first female M.P., Agnes Macphail (1921-35), and the first federal cabinet ministers, Conservative, Ellen Fairclough (1950-63) and Liberal, Judy LaMarsh, (1960-68) found it difficult to combat prejudice. The latter's *Memoirs of a Bird in a Gilded Cage* (1969) stands as a remarkable indictment of post-war Canadian politics. The overwhelming defeat of Flora MacDonald for the Conservative leadership in 1976, and the loss by a small margin of Rosemary Brown when she challenged for the NDP leadership in 1975, suggested that parties could not readily shed prejudices. Labour leaders like Madeleine Parent, who organized Quebec factory workers beginning in the 1940s, and Eileen Tallman, who attempted to unionize Eaton's employees in the same decade, encountered still greater hostility.

The *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women* revealed how far Canada was from real equality. The rebirth of the woman's movement in the 1960s increased the momentum for reform. Rooted first in the politics of the left and universities, it has expanded to touch most Canadians. The emergence of a feminist

press such as Vancouver's *Kinesis* and Halifax's *Pandora*, of powerful groups like the Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ, founded in 1966), the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC, founded in 1972), and LEAF (Legal Action Education Fund, founded 1985), and of an extensive grass-roots activism expressed in transition houses, folk festivals and campaigns from abortion to the legalization of midwifery and world peace stimulated women's politics in the last quarter of the century.

That energy, with its assault on traditional prejudices, underlie, whether they all acknowledged it or not, the emergence of a new generation of female leaders. In 1990 Social Credit's Rita Johnson succeeded to the premiership of B.C. In 1991 Nellie J. Cournoyea became House Leader in the Northwest Territories. In 1993 Catherine Callbeck became Premier of Prince Edward Island. A number of women, such as Sheila Copps, Audrey McLaughlin and Sharon Carstairs became leaders or deputy leaders of political parties in the same years. Briefly, in 1993, Kim Campbell served as Prime Minister of Canada. In the union movement which more than ever in these years sought to express women's needs in matters from daycare to sexual harassment policies, leaders, such as Shirley Carr, first female president of the Canadian Labour Congress (1986), were also influential. Union activism also abounded locally as when thousands of nurses walked the picket line in powerful demonstrations of solidarity in B.C. and Alberta in the 1990s.

As *Canadian Women's Issues*, v. I, (1993) by Ruth Roach Pierson, Marjorie Griffin Cohen, Paula Bourne, and Philinda Masters amply illustrates, women continue to struggle for equality. The Lavell decision of 1973, which upheld Indian women's loss of status when they married non-Indians, and the Bliss decision of 1978, which denied that pregnancy discrimination was sex discrimination, dramatically illustrated the inadequacy of protection under the 1960 Canadian Bill of Rights. In 1981 a nation-wide campaign won the inclusion of strong equality rights provisions in the new Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Subsequent litigation has sought to extend equality, as with increased access to abortion services and improved definitions of employment and pay equity. The presence of outstanding legal feminists, such as Supreme Court Justice Bertha Wilson, appointed in 1982, has emerged as a major factor in the equality politics of the last decades of the century.

As women endeavour to take their place in Canadian society, there is, for all the signs of success, much that remains to be worked out. In particular, the Canadian women's movement is confronting the fact of its own white heterosexual privilege. Preoccupation with the variety of ways in which women's lives have been curtailed by patriarchy has too often meant that feminists

have given little or no thought to other forms of discrimination. The election of Sunera Thobani to the presidency of Canada's leading feminist organization, the National Action Committee, in 1993, suggests that many feminists are willing to rethink white privilege. The difficulties of creating a woman's movement which is truly inclusive of diversity remains, however, the order of the coming day.

Women have come far since *Women of Canada* but as *Work in Progress* tells us, they have a long way to go. Canada, while a much better place to live for many people, still treats some as second-class citizens. The voices of First Nations, disabled, lesbian, and visible minority women are often unheard in decisions about the future. Prospects for life in the northern half of this continent rest with our ability to understand the forces which divide Quebec from the rest of Canada. Quebecois have often allied with the "indépendantist" Parti Québécois. While some disillusionment was occasioned by its adoption of anti-abortion policies after the 1976 election, many Quebec feminists continue to see their interests as best served within a separate nation. During the national referendum on the Charlottetown Accord in October 1992, feminists in Canada were sharply divided. Guarantees of distinct society status for Quebec and aboriginal self-government, which most accepted, were weighed against the failure to protect the equality of native women and the potential threat to the creation of new social programmes. The massive defeat of the referendum saw Canadian women still uncertain about how to acknowledge diversity, protect women's rights, and construct new constitutional arrangements. Debates over all these matters will take Canadian women well into the next century. ♦

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She thanks Pamela Rogers for research assistance.

Quote Unquote

I want for myself what I want for other women, absolute equality. After that is secured, then men and women can take turns at being angels.

— **Agnes Macphail.**

If members of my sex appear at times to be inadequate, it must be because a wise God created them to match the men.

— **E. Cora Hind**

‘THE MILITARY HISTORY OF AN UNMILITARY PEOPLE’

War and Peacekeeping

By J.L. Granatstein



"The Hitler Line" by Charles Comfort: Canadian forces in battle, Italy, 1944.

“**T**he Military History of an Unmilitary People.” That was the subtitle G.F.G. Stanley gave his book *Canada's Soldiers*, the first — and for a long period — the only complete study of Canadian military history from the earliest days to the modern era. Of course, Stanley was right: Canadians are the very essence of an unmilitary people. Protected by two oceans and a sea of ice against invasion from overseas, sharing a continent with an ordinarily friendly giant, we have tended to doze in the sureness of our security. Protected by our myths and certainties, we have eschewed arms until danger impinged very closely

upon us or our friends. Then we have usually reacted with a vigour that belied our unmilitary nature.

The dominating idea that has shaped Canadian military history is the “militia myth,” a concept that sprang from post-mortems on the War of 1812. Who had saved Canada, the British regulars or the sturdy Canadian yeomanry who had emerged from their farms to drive off the Yankee invaders? Historians have answered that question with a rare unanimity — the British laid out the strategy and, with their Indian allies, did the bulk of the fighting while the Canadian auxiliaries for the most part were a rabble kept in the rear. The Canadian people

naturally drew a different conclusion: they had risen as one to defeat the enemy. That was perhaps a pardonable blindness to the realities of the situation, but the conclusion that Canadian governments drew from this myth-making was more harmful. If the mighty Americans had been driven off by the untrained militia levies in 1812, then why should any money be spent on defence? Why should there be any professional Canadian soldiery? Why should anyone even pay attention to such questions? And once American bellicosity largely disappeared after the American Civil War and the few crises that roiled the waters between London and Washington in the latter years of the nineteenth century, such a policy with minor modifications seemed prudent enough.

The Riel Rebellion in 1870-71, put down by British troops with some Canadian assistance, worried Canada enough to consider the need for some more permanent military force. This was especially so as the British withdrew from Canada (other than from Halifax and Esquimalt) in 1871, the War Office providing only a General Officer Commanding to be in charge of the Dominion's military forces and a few staff officers. One reaction in Ottawa was to create the North West Mounted Police to work in the West; another was to begin the task of establishing a tiny, ill-trained and patronage-ridden Permanent Force. Its primary job was training the militia, itself a quantum leap less well-trained and every bit as soiled by patronage. The Royal



Military College, opened in 1876 at Kingston, Ontario, trained a handful of officers each year for the militia regiments and the PF, though many of the ablest graduates accepted commissions in the Imperial forces. Still, in 1885, the Dominion could mount an expedition to the North West to crush Riel's second rebellion, an operational result achieved more by weight of fire than by any tactical skill demonstrated by the British General Officer Commanding all forces in Canada, Major-General Frederick Middleton, or his senior officers. At sea, defence was left to the Royal Navy, but a Fisheries Protection Service that operated on the coasts provided the nucleus of an eventual Canadian navy.

Essentially, however, Canada was undefended and defenceless. Defence seemed unnecessary in the absence of enemies and the presence of the colonial relationship with Britain whose sailors patrolled the ocean trade routes and whose envoys in foreign parts acted in Canadian interests when and where necessary. Implicit in the colonial arrangement was that Britain would protect Canada from attack. Still, there were possibilities, terrible nightmares that troubled every prime minister. Worst was that Britain might fall out with the United States and thus create an enemy for Canada, one that could readily avail itself of the proximity of British North America to strike a blow at Britain. In the Civil War years there were fears that Britain and the North might go to war, and in the post-war years concern that the North might use an easy invasion of the Dominion as balm to heal the wounds of the bloody war. The Treaty of Washington in 1871 put paid to these fears — at Canada's expense, or so Sir John A. Macdonald, stripped of reciprocity and faced with American fishermen again in Canadian waters, believed. But he had signed, and he defended himself in Parliament by setting out what might have happened had he refused: "Canada would be, as a matter of course, the battleground of the two nations. We should be the sufferers, our country would be devastated, our people slaughtered, our prosperity destroyed."

That was still true a quarter-century later when Anglo-American ruckuses, most notably over the disputed Venezuelan/British Guiana border in 1895-6 that troubled Americans who considered the Monroe Doctrine to be sacred writ, almost led to war. Ottawa hurriedly purchased arms to try to fend off what seemed an imminent invasion and then characteristically regretted the purchases when the crisis cooled.

Equally worrying to Canadian leaders was that Britain might find itself at war elsewhere in the world and call upon Canada for assistance. There had long been a tacit acceptance of a division of responsibility in such matters. In the years before the turn of the century, Canadians understood that if Britain was seriously threatened they would have to participate; indeed, they

would want to join in to the fullest extent possible. But in minor colonial skirmishes, there was no commitment. Macdonald had said as much in 1884 when Canada was asked to send troops to the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan to help defeat the Mahdi: "Why should we waste money and men in this wretched business? England is not at war ... Our men and money would therefore be sacrificed to get Gladstone & Co., out of the hole they have plunged themselves into by their own imbecility." Macdonald, however, could not resist a British call for boatmen — the Nile voyageurs, as they soon styled themselves — to help move avenging British forces to Khartoum.

Anti-imperialist arguments went over well with Canadians in 1884, but by 1899 the mood in the country and the world had changed. The United States had just fought a "glorious little war" against Spain, and imperialist sentiment was in the very air. The bumptious Americans were casting covetous eyes at the goldfields of the Klondike, and as the boundary between the Yukon and Alaska was in dispute, Ottawa thought it prudent to despatch a small military force, made up primarily of Permanent Force infantry, to the territory. The Yukon Field Force happily avoided war with the Americans and was withdrawn by 1900. The boundary dispute would be resolved in a more judicious way.

The Yukon proved only a brief distraction for the Empire was soon heavily involved elsewhere. When the Boer republics in South Africa found themselves at war with Britain in the fall of 1899, the pressure on the government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier to contribute men to the cause was enormous. Laurier initially resisted but he was overmatched by most of his English-speaking Cabinet ministers and the propaganda drums beating incessantly in the newspapers. At the Department of Militia and Defence, the British GOC, General Hutton, had already prepared plans for a Canadian force — and had helpfully leaked the details to his journalist friends. From Whitehall, Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain added his pressures. Only in Quebec was there open dissent, French Canadians seeing the Boers as victims of Anglo-Saxon imperialism, much like themselves.

Outgunned despite the opposition to participation in Quebec, Laurier gave in. The Militia Act did not seem to permit troops to be used other than for the defence of Canada, but the law was always flexible in an emergency. The Liberal Cabinet agreed in the end to raise a regiment of infantry, some one thousand officers and men to be commanded by Canadians and with its equipment provided at government expense (and ordinarily from good Liberal contractors) in Canada. Once the regiment, soon to be known all across the country as the Royal Canadian Regiment, reached South Africa, the Cabinet decided prudently, costs were to be borne

by London. This despatch of troops, Laurier said, trying to appease opinion in his home province, could not be construed as a precedent for future action. Humbug, said the young Liberal firebrand, Henri Bourassa, M.P., hitherto Laurier's protégé. "The precedent, Sir, is the accomplished fact."

The ranks of the RCR quickly filled, men volunteering from the militia and from the streets. Medical standards were strict — ill-shaped and overlapping toes could prevent enlistment — but most of the men and many of the officers were virtually without military training. The commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel William Otter was a PF soldier, a veteran of the North West campaign, a dour man who was soon horrified by the politicking all around him and by the unpreparedness of his men. Otter had seen Riel's Métis nearly win against the armed might of the Dominion, and he fretted about his command's skills, about the shoddy



"C" Company of the Royal Canadian Regiment in action on a South African kopje, January, 1900.

National Archives of Canada

equipment being issued his men, and about the appalling shipboard accommodations that were provided by the government to take the regiment to South Africa.

Amateurism was the curse of the Canadian militia, and Otter railed against it. His sternness won him few friends in the ranks aboard ship or once the Canadians reached Capetown on 30 November. The debacles of "Black Week", a series of routs suffered by British regulars under Generals Buller and Gatacre in December, might have suggested that Otter's insistence on training was right. But the soldiers grumbled, complaining

about British rations and bitterly railing against Otter's insistence on route marches. One private, Albert Perkins, wrote home that "now the Colonel has taken it into his head to give us a march every day at 4 o'clock. If he would only start in easy it would not be so bad, but last night we had a forced march of thirteen miles, and I am as sore as the dickens."

In February 1900, the Canadians took part in the great advance orchestrated by Field Marshal Lord Roberts, the new British commander, that aimed to cut the main Boer armies' lines of communication. At a spot on the map called Paardeberg Drift, the British and the Boers met. The RCRs, part of a brigade commanded by Colonel Horace Smith-Dorrien, were in the



Colonel William Otter enjoys a word with Sir Frederick Borden, Laurier's Minister of Militia, as they prepare to inspect the troops at Niagara-on-the-Lake.

thick of the fight, a brutal slogging match. Then on 27 February, orders came for Otter's men to take the Boers' main position in a night assault. The attack was beaten off, the Canadian casualties substantial, and the survivors were pinned down by the Boers' fire. Incredibly, at dawn, to their surprise, the RCR discovered that their hitherto impossible position overlooked the Boer lines, giving them a superb vantage point. Soon, white flags fluttered over the enemy trenches. The hungry Canadians liberated the Boers' breakfast rations and were startled to discover that most of the enemy troopers were greybeards or teenagers.

Paardeberg was a famous victory, the triumph of Canadian arms, a testimony to the valour of the men from the Dominion. Or so the Canadian press loudly

and proudly proclaimed. Colonel Otter was less demonstrative, fully aware that luck had played a major part and that had the enemy fire not pinned down his men, a rebuff might have turned into a rout instead of a victory. With not a little bitterness, the Canadian commander called the war nothing but "blood and sand and everything that is disagreeable [and] all for a bit of riband and a piece of silver." Still, Paardeberg was a victory, the first notable Canadian feat of arms of the new century.

Black Week and Paardeberg combined to spur recruiting for the war. A second contingent, raised much like the first but consisting of mounted riflemen and artillery, was en route to the Cape by the time of Paardeberg, and the troopers feared that they might not see action. So too did the men of Lord Strathcona's Horse, a cavalry unit raised privately (at a cost of \$550,083 in 1900 dollars or at least \$15 million in present ones) by the railway magnate who since 1896 had been Canada's high commissioner in London. They need not have worried as there was plenty of fighting for all. Bloemfontein, the capital of the Orange Free State, fell in March and Johannesburg and Pretoria, the Transvaal's main centres, followed soon after. But the Boers did not do as decent soldiers did and capitulate once their armies had been defeated in the field. Instead, they continued fighting, developing and refining guerilla tactics to harass the British with ambushes and attacks on supply trains and isolated posts. The British resorted to scorched earth tactics and concentration camps, moving the enemy's women and children off the land, and the bitterness of war increased exponentially.

The Canadians of the later contingents did their share of the fighting, though the RCRs, much to the horror of Colonel Otter, opted to return home when their one year of service concluded. There were no battles, only skirmishes, but some were deadly enough for all that. There were stories — and more than stories — of atrocities against prisoners, and the Strathconas and their colonel, Sam Steele, earned a notable reputation for ferocity before their return to Canada, along with the men of the second contingent, early in 1901. Still the war dragged on, and still more men were recruited in Canada: a mounted rifle regiment in 1901, four more in 1902, and more than 1,200 men for the South African Constabulary, a force commanded by Steele that he aimed to turn into the equivalent of the Canadian Mounties. In all 8,372 Canadians were raised for service during the war (including a battalion raised for garrison Halifax, thus releasing the British unit there for war service); 89 men were killed in action, 135 succumbed to disease, and 252 were wounded.

A small war to be sure, but one that set a pattern for Canadian overseas military adventures. There was no unanimity in Canada about participation in the struggle,

seen by many as nothing more or less than British imperialism run wild. The organizational effort behind the raising of men was slapdash, and patronage intruded its bony finger into every corner from appointments to supplies. The soldiers acquitted themselves well, though not without resisting efforts to make them better disciplined and fit enough to withstand the rigours of the campaign. And the people at home, perhaps unlike most of the soldiers who did the killing and dying, gloried in the exploits of "their boys". As far as Canada was concerned, the South African War had validated the militia myth once more.

The years between the South African War and the Great War saw no real change in the Canadian approach to defence. The British-appointed General Officer Commanding disappeared in 1904 — after a fight about the continuing incidence of patronage in the militia — and was replaced by a grandly-titled Chief of the General Staff, a Canadian government appointee, but not surprisingly a British officer. Still, that was a nationalist gain for the Laurier government. The government's decision in 1910 to create a Canadian navy was similarly intended. The Royal Navy, faced with the expansion of the German fleet and the development of new "dreadnaught" battleships, feared that it was about to lose its lead. The call went out to the Dominions for aid, and imperialist-leaning Canadians demanded that Canada contribute. The government's decision was to create a Canadian navy of cruisers and destroyers, using the Fisheries Protection Service as a nucleus, and to open a naval college to train officers.

This modest effort was denounced by Robert Borden's Conservatives and Henri Bourassa's *nationalistes*, and in a critical by-election in Drummond-Arthabaska, Quebec, Bourassa's men went through the riding posing as officers checking the rolls so that conscription could be put in force for M. Laurier's navy. Unscrupulous, but effective; the Liberal candidate lost, and the next year Laurier fell to the Conservatives on the question of reciprocal trade with the United States.

The new prime minister, Borden, pushed through a huge gift of \$35 million (at a time when the entire federal budget was \$143 million) to Britain to build dreadnaughts, but this horrified his Quebec supporters and inevitably went down to defeat in the Liberal-controlled Senate. Britain thus got nothing, and the Canadian navy was allowed to exist in limbo, its entire fleet consisting of two obsolete British cruisers used as training ships. When war began in 1914, and Canada as a colony was legally bound by Britain's decision to fight Germany, the Canadian navy was for all practical purposes non-existent.

The army was in marginally better condition. Thanks to the energetic leadership of its Minister of Militia and Defence, Sam Hughes, the Conservative government

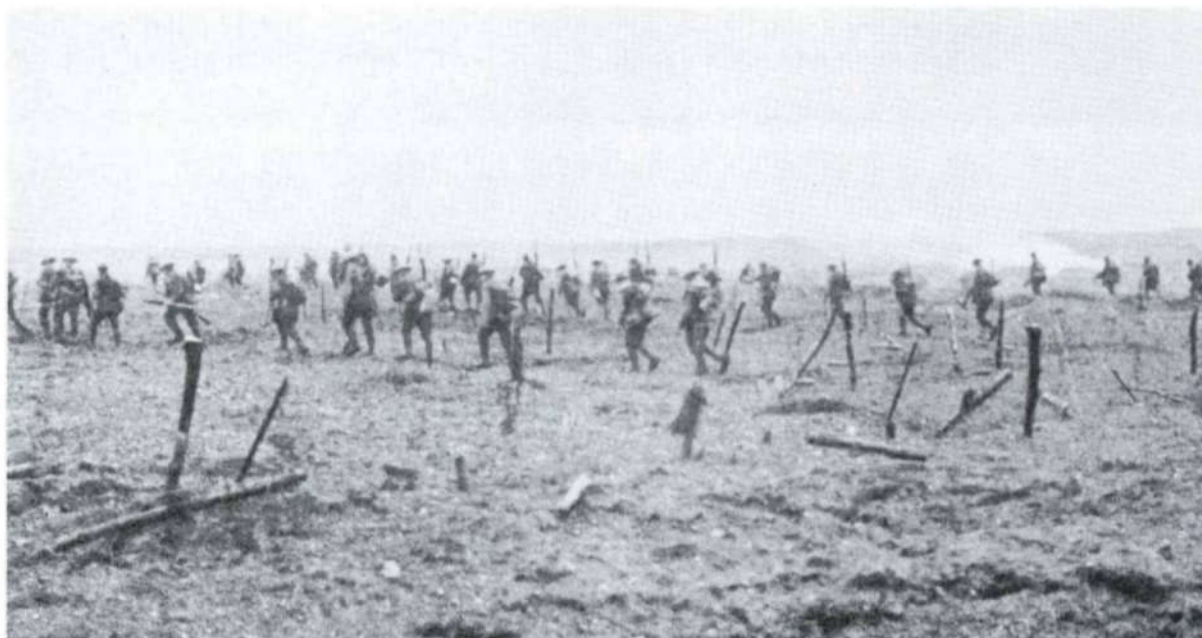


Members of "Laurier's Navy" pose in the summer heat on HMCS "Niobe" as the nation drifts toward the Great War.

had built militia drill halls across the country and sped up mobilization planning. Hughes was a true believer in the militia myth after his experiences during the South African war watching British regular army officers blunder, and he scorned the Permanent Force as wastrels, parasites, and "bar room loafers". The result was that Canada had an enthusiastic but largely untrained citizen army of some 70,000, a PF of just over 3,000, and a defence budget of \$11 million a year, a sum much criticized across the country. Still, it would prove to be much too little with which to face the great test of a world war.

Initially, it seemed sufficient. In August 1914, Hughes scrapped the carefully worked-out mobilization plans and concentrated the first Canadian contingent at a camp he ordered built in the bush at Valcartier, Quebec. Patronage ruled over appointments and contracts, there was scant time for training with the Ross rifles provided, and there was a huge muddle, but incredibly the minister's energy produced the goods: 30,000 men boarded the huge convoy that carried the 1st Canadian Division to England at the beginning of October. "Men," Hughes' printed farewell message to the troops read, "the world regards you as a marvel." The soldiers, overwhelmingly British-born though most of their officers were Canadian, jeered and pitched the handbills into the St. Lawrence. Most of them would not see Canada again.

None of the volunteers had an inkling of what awaited; neither did their government. After training for several months in the appalling conditions of Salisbury Plain, the division went to France and then to the trenches that stretched unbroken from Switzerland to the sea. It was their bad luck to be in the lines near



Canadian troops advance under fire, April 1917. Their destination was Vimy Ridge.

Ypres in Belgium when the Germans launched the first gas attack against them. Though a neighbouring French division broke and ran when the choking cloud drifted over their lines, the Canadians held. In chaotic scenes that approximated Dante's *Inferno*, the Germans were thrown back, though all too frequently the Ross rifles jammed. The casualties at Ypres were horrific — 6,035 officers and men killed, wounded or taken prisoner. At home, Canadians were stunned at the casualty lists that filled pages of the newspapers.

The war settled down to a slogging match. The 1st Canadian Division was joined by a 2nd, a 3rd, and a 4th until by the end of 1916, the Canadian Corps was a large, well-equipped formation. It was also well-led, a rarity in Canadian military history. Despite patronage practices at home and in Britain that shamed the nation, in the trenches survival of the fittest — and the ablest — prevailed. Officers who failed in action were shipped back to England or Canada; those who succeeded in leading their men effectively to their objectives won promotion. Efforts to rule by patronage at the front were beaten back — even Sam Hughes' son Garnet was denied the division he craved, though he could not be stopped from commanding the 5th Division which waited in England for movement orders that did not come.

By late 1916, the Canadians had begun to win a reputation for disciplined ferociousness. The culmination came at Vimy Ridge at Easter, 1917 when in a brilliant set-piece attack the Corps took a position hitherto believed impregnable. The Corps commander,

Lieutenant-General Sir Julian Byng, a British officer enormously popular with the men, soon was promoted; in his place was Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Currie, an Ontario-born British Columbian who had served in the prewar militia, been given a brigade in 1914 in part because of his friendship with Garnet Hughes, and had successfully commanded a brigade and a division in action. Arguably the best soldier Canada has ever produced, Currie succeeded despite his pear-shaped appearance and his complete lack of charisma. His forte was intelligence, careful planning, and a fierce resistance to wasting the lives of his men, all unfortunately rare traits on the Western Front. From Vimy onwards, the Corps created an astonishing record of success, becoming a recognized crack formation and one that caused the enemy to fear whenever its intelligence reported the Canadians' presence.

Conditions in the trenches were horrible, a morass of mud, filth, rats, and perpetual danger. Inevitably, many soldiers looked upward to the aircraft soaring above their lines and a flood of Canadians sought to join the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service (after 1918 combined into the Royal Flying Corps); 22,000 succeeded and demonstrated that Canadians had a knack for air warfare. Men like Billy Bishop, a failed cadet at the Royal Military College, Raymond Collishaw, and Billy Barker scored impressive victory totals in air combat. The survivors, like Bishop, won decorations galore and lionization at home. The unlucky and the unskilled died in large numbers — air war was every bit as vicious as the trenches.

At sea, the war similarly was waged without quarter. Britain's lifeline to North America had to be cut if the Germans were to win the war, and the weapon employed was the U-boat. The Royal Canadian Navy, scarcely in existence in 1914, grew slightly, but shortages of ships and commanders limited its role to a subsidiary one. The Second World War would be the RCN's test in action.

The nation's test came in the summer of 1917. Casualties in France and Flanders had begun to exceed reinforcements, and the government, increasingly desperate to shore up the Corps and build on the renown Canada had won, began to contemplate conscription. The problem was that Quebec bitterly opposed any such measure in a war that, to habitants, seemed to involve no Canadian interests. Quebec enlistments had been small, though the 22e Battalion, the Vandoos, had won a substantial reputation in action. Farmers, too, were generally slow to enlist as were ethnic Canadians and, in fact, the Canadian-born generally. In May 1917, Prime Minister Borden pronounced for conscription and the next seven months featured the formation of a coalition government, a bitter election, and the implementation of conscription, beginning in January 1918. In all, some 24,000 conscripts joined units in France, a trivial number compared to the more than half a million who had volunteered; the bitterness created as a result of compulsion lasted for decades and shaped policy in the Second World War. To Borden, to English Canada, however, conscription undoubtedly had been necessary. Canada, they believed, was fighting the war as a nation, not as a colony, and all would be lost if the army overseas was not reinforced.

The war came to its victorious end in November 1918. Canadian dead filled cemeteries all along the front, 60,000 in all. Another 173,000 suffered wounds, and the best of a generation was lost in a war that American publicists proclaimed a war to end war. If only it had been true.

The Canada that emerged from the war was a different place than the bucolic Dominion of 1914. Recognition of Canada's place in the world had been earned in blood, and Canada sat as a participant in the Peace Conference and in the new League of Nations. The first giant steps toward complete autonomy had been taken in France and Flanders. War industry had begun to transform the economy too, as the state had stepped in, hesitantly and reluctantly, to be sure, to impose centralization, rationalization, and order to a laissez-faire society. It had worked too — Canada produced more than a billion dollars worth of munitions during the war, and this from an economy that had scarcely any heavy industry in 1914.

But in one way Canada had not changed. As soon as the war was over, the calls to cut back the armed forces



Canadian Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden: taking a chance on conscription.





Prime Minister Mackenzie King: Not necessarily conscription.

began. Sir Arthur Currie and others among his most successful young officers dreamt of a good-size Permanent Force and a reorganized, well-trained militia all buttressed by peacetime conscription. It was not to be. Conscription was a non-starter — no politician would have touched it after the strains induced by the Military Service Act of 1917 — and the military dwindled to nothing, helped mightily by a sense of revulsion at the casualties of 1914-18. The Permanent Force never reached a strength of five thousand in the 1920s and 1930s, the Royal Canadian Air Force, established in 1923, was smaller still, and the Royal Canadian Navy had only some two thousand personnel and a handful of ships. The numbers in the reserve forces were larger, but training was derisory. The militia myth, proven a fallacy in South Africa and in the Great War, reasserted itself, as did the very worst of the amateurism that had been the curse of Canadian arms for a century and more. Budgets dried up as governments sought to balance the books. The peak interwar military spending on the army, just a year before war erupted in 1939, was \$9 million. The wonder is that capable men stayed in the military through the long armistice. Fortunately enough did so that when war against Hitler's Germany began in September 1939, there was a tiny nucleus on which to build.

The one lesson of the Great War that seemed to have been learned was that conscription was too divisive to be employed in Canada. As early as March 1939 both Prime Minister Mackenzie King and Conservative leader Robert Manion had pledged themselves against compulsion and King repeated such promises. In

September 1939, his Quebec ministers did the same in a provincial election in October, and he did so again in the federal election in early 1940. Moreover, King said Canada's effort in the second German war was to be one of "limited liability" — never again would Canada tear itself apart in an effort to raise the last man and the last dollar. The major effort was to be in the air with Canada as the site for the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, a large effort to train aircrew that was scheduled to cost Canada huge sums and which was to absorb most of the RCAF's personnel in operating the scheme. None could conceive of an air war that could cost lives the way infantry fighting did.

The naval effort developed quickly too. Canada's few modern ships began escorting convoys at once, and shipyards from the Maritimes to the Great Lakes and British Columbia began to produce corvettes and minesweepers. There was a long way to go.

Initially the war went the way the government had predicted. The 1st Division, raised in September, proceeded overseas in December 1939, ready for a period of training prior to going into the line in France. A small number of pilots went to Britain, and the RCN did its convoy tasks. The "Phoney War" seemed to provide little strain.

Matters altered dramatically in April and May 1940. Hitler struck at Denmark and Norway and then launched a blitzkrieg at the Low Countries and France. As the British army escaped by the skin of its teeth at Dunkirk, as England seemed in danger of invasion, the idea of limited liability went out the window. The dollar sign that had hitherto governed the war effort was scrapped, and every effort now went into the fight. Spending increased dramatically, men flooded to the colours — and by 1941 the women's services were enlisting the first of the 50,000 who served — and Canada began to transform itself into a major military power. Indeed for a country of just over ten million, the war effort was simply extraordinary with over a million men and women in uniform and millions more working to produce a total of \$22 billion in munitions, a sum that can be put into perspective by realizing that the Gross National Product in 1939 was just over \$5 billion. The RCAF reached a strength of a quarter million, its pilots provided the aircrew for a full bomber group and thousands more served in Royal Air Force squadrons, and the BCATP produced over 130,000 air crew, arguably Canada's most important contribution to victory. The RCN increased in size 50-fold, becoming the fourth largest navy in the world. Its crews took time to learn the hazardous task of fighting Nazi submarines, but they learned well, sank 52 U-boats (some in co-operation with aircraft or ships of other navies), and escorted almost half the convoys across the North Atlantic.

The army again represented the country's major military effort with some three-quarters of a million men and women donning khaki. Action came slowly — and, initially, with disastrous results. An understrength brigade, sent to Hong Kong in the fall of 1941, was lost to the man when the Japanese attacked in the Pacific, and much of the 2nd Canadian Division was killed or captured in an abortive raid on the French port of Dieppe in August 1942. Not until 1943 when the 1st Division and a tank brigade took part in the invasion of Sicily and, augmented by a corps headquarters and the 5th Armoured Division, began to advance up the Italian boot, did the army move into sustained action. Three divisions meanwhile trained in England, preparing for the invasion of France which came in June 1944. Fighting as the First Canadian Army under command of General Harry Crerar, a PF officer of great ambition, the Canadians played major roles in Normandy, in the Scheldt estuary and, now joined by the corps from Italy, in the final assaults against the Nazis in the spring of 1945.

The toll was almost 23,000 for the army, more than 17,000 in the RCAF, and just over 2,000 in the RCN; 42,000 Canadians had died to restore democracy to the world, while another 54,000 suffered wounds in action.

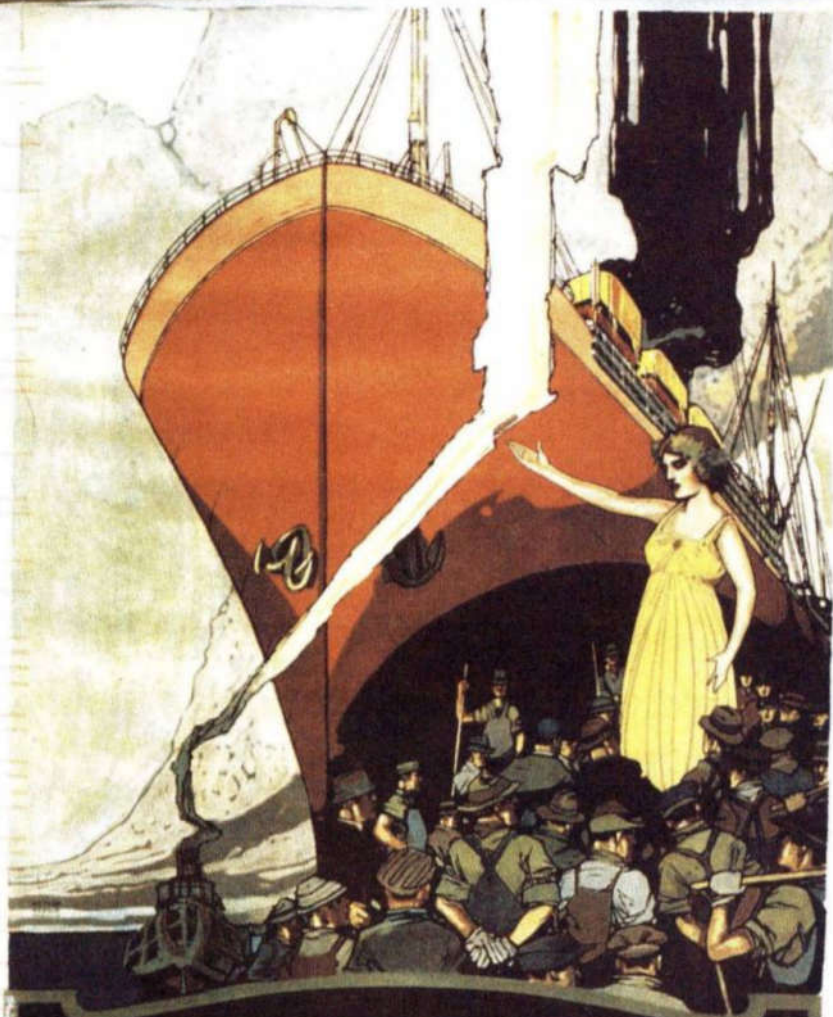
At home, conscription became necessary to maintain the army's ranks in Europe. Using "wastage" rates prepared by the British Army at a time when German air-

power remained strong, planners had calculated that large numbers of reinforcements would be necessary for rear area troops. Infantry, they expected, need constitute only 45 of every 100 replacements. But infantry casualties soon amounted to three-quarters of all killed and wounded, and the cumbersome training system simply could not adjust. The only option, the army chiefs told the government in the fall of 1944, was to use home defence conscripts, enlisted under the National Resources Mobilization Act of June 1940. After a 1942 plebiscite, the government had the power to send the conscripts, derisively known as Zombies, overseas, but all knew the political fallout in Quebec would be serious. In November 1944, finally, his Cabinet teetering at the brink of dissolution, Prime Minister King conceded that there was no other option and agreed to despatch some 16,000 Zombies overseas as infantry reinforcements. While there were desertions in the ranks and ructions in Quebec, the political and military crises passed over with surprising speed.

Less transitory was the major shift in imperial allegiances the war produced. Canada had gone to war one week after Britain in September 1939, a gesture toward the formal independence it had achieved under the Statute of Westminster of 1931. The British tie remained strong, but after Dunkirk, after Germany had Europe under its sway and Britain seemed likely to fall, Canada and the United States felt obliged to draw closer together to defend the continent. Indeed in the



Canadian POWs at Hong Kong at the time of their release, 1945. They had been prisoners of the Japanese since Christmas 1941.



OUR EXPORT TRADE IS VITAL BUY VICTORY BONDS

In both world wars Canadians were urged to make a financial contribution to the war effort. This poster from the Great War promotes Victory Bonds.

In two world wars Canadians had a recognition problem, as this 1940s cartoon from "Punch" illustrates.



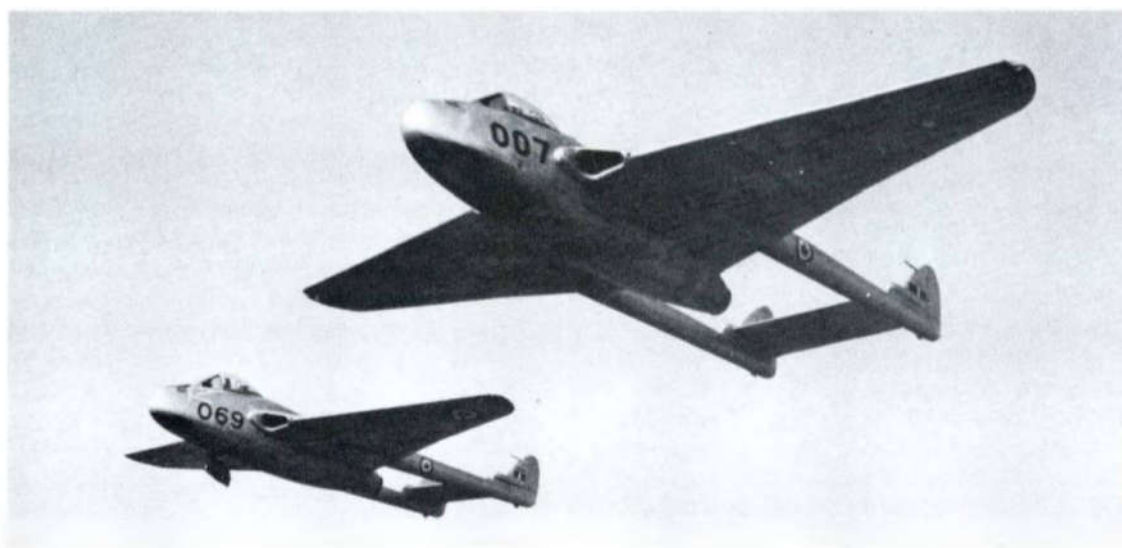
"What does C-A-N-A-D-A on the arm stand for?"

late 1930s both Mackenzie King and President Franklin Roosevelt had spoken publicly and privately about continental defence. At a meeting at Ogdensburg, New York, in August 1940 they agreed to set up a Permanent Joint Board on Defence to draw up plans. For the first time since brief co-operative efforts during the Great War, the two countries began to work together; this time, as the PJBD's name suggested, it was *permanent*. After Pearl Harbor, there were thousands of U.S. troops stationed in the Dominion, building the Alaska Highway and manning installations. At war's end, Ottawa bought every installation back at full price to ensure no possible American claim could remain.

Still, the defence arrangement was permanent. This became clear once victory over Germany and Japan was won. Co-operation between the two North American nations continued in the face of a new threat across the North Pole from the Soviet Union, a threat that potentially put Canada on the front lines for the first time since the early nineteenth century. In the circumstances, the military could not be cut back to nothing as had been done in 1919, though the government tried. By 1947, the three services had a regular force strength of under 30,000, and combat capability was very limited. Military budgets which had approximated \$5 billion at the height of the war had now dwindled to \$227 million or 1.7 percent of GNP.

What changed matters was the government's decision to sign on to the North Atlantic Treaty, a defensive organization that united the North American nations with the democracies of Western Europe in 1949. NATO seemed an ideal situation for Ottawa: it committed the Americans to the defence of Europe, and it

helped submerge the imbalanced 1-to-1 relationship in North America into a broader alliance that gave Canada the say in strategic planning it had never managed to achieve in the Great and Second World Wars. The next year war broke out in Korea and, perhaps because memories of the Hong Kong debacle were still fresh, Canada had to be pressed by Washington to send a specially raised brigade of troops, several destroyers, and an RCAF transport squadron to participate in a major effort to force the North Koreans out of the South. The Canadians fought well in Korea, remaining there until the armistice in 1953. Politically, what was most significant about the war was that it was nominally a response under the doctrine of collective security espoused by the United Nations, though practically the resistance to the Communist invasion was directed by the United States. Even more significant for the West, Korea seemed to prove that the Soviet Union was moving into an aggressive phase, and Canada responded, much more willingly this time, by dispatching troops to Europe — a brigade group, an air division of Sabre jet fighters, and a very substantial anti-submarine warfare effort by the RCN — and stepping up its defence effort to a remarkable degree and at home and abroad in peacetime. The regular forces reached a strength of 120,000 by the early 1950s, the defence budget absorbed 7.6 percent of GNP in 1953, and there was money enough to build networks of radar lines across the North to signal a Soviet air attack and to equip the forces with the best tanks, aircraft and ships available. For a brief moment, with Canada's professional military at the peak of their power and influence, the militia myth seemed dead and buried and the lessons of the past to have been learned.



Department of National Defence

De Havilland "Vampire" jets over R.C.A.F. Station, Trenton, Ontario, at the height of the Cold War.

The moment was all too brief. By the late 1950s defence costs had begun to wear on over-burdened governments and taxpayers. Force strengths began to drop and budgets to be cut, while equipment rapidly grew more and more obsolescent. By the mid-1960s, personnel costs in the Department of National Defence left little room for new equipment, and the Liberal government's defence minister, Paul Hellyer, resolved to break the logjam. His solution was first the integration of the services and then their unification. The army, navy and air force would disappear, to be replaced by a leaner, meaner single service wearing a common uniform. The elimination of triplication was expected to save money and lead to the purchase of new equipment. The resulting public furore, the resignation of generals and admirals, the parliamentary debate all could have been predicted, but Hellyer stuck to his guns and got his way. Regrettably, the new equipment did not materialize, as the new government of Pierre Trudeau froze the defence budget and soon reduced the commitment to NATO by 50 percent.

At the same time, the links with the U.S. military grew ever stronger. The Air Force, flying American aircraft for the most part, looked to their American counterparts as models. Co-operation in the North American Air Defence Command, an agreement achieved thanks to the lobbying of both services and established in 1957-58, increasingly brought senior officers into close contact, and the bonds of friendship strengthened the alliance ties. The Navy, similarly co-operating in joint commands in the Atlantic and Pacific, found old links to the Royal Navy replaced by ties to the bigger and more powerful USN. As early as 1962 and the Cuban Missile Crisis, the RCAF and RCN leapt to co-operate with their American colleagues, despite the unwillingness of Prime Minister John Diefenbaker's government to authorize such moves. Within months, frustrated by the government's obvious reluctance to acquire the nuclear weapons it had ordered for NATO and NORAD aircraft, the RCAF effectively ran a public relations campaign to persuade Canadians that Diefenbaker had to be replaced. He was, thanks to a Cabinet revolt initiated by his defence minister. The transnational links that bound the air and naval forces had become more powerful than civil control of the military.

Only the Army was slow to adapt psychologically to the new allegiances, though by the 1960s its equipment increasingly was U.S.-designed. Unification, striking a blow at cherished — and British — rituals, badges, buttons and headgear, helped push the army toward a more American model. The air force, much the most American of the services, now was clearly top dog at National Defence Headquarters.

Perhaps the diminution of the old links helped decrease public interest in the ever-continuing Cold

War, and soon the solitary role of the armed forces with public support was the national commitment to United Nations (and frequently extra-UN) peacekeeping. Canada had begun sending officer observers on peacekeeping duty in the early 1950s, and thanks to Lester Pearson's initiative in creating the United Nations Emergency Force in the Sinai Desert in 1956, it had made a major commitment of troops there. Then had followed a host of missions abroad in places as unlikely as Indochina, New Guinea, Yemen, the Congo, and Lebanon. Another major commitment, begun in 1964, was in Cyprus. In October 1970 when terrorism exploded in Quebec, the army sent troops into the streets of Ottawa and Montreal. That earned the military some gratitude from the Trudeau government, ordinarily less than concerned with defence questions other than making the forces bilingual. Significantly, the military initially disliked peacekeeping (and especially so at home), an obligation it saw as a distraction from the primary task of training to fight the Soviet Union in Central Europe. But peacekeeping was good public relations, and governments, spurred by Pearson's Nobel Peace Prize, liked it, so the military saluted smartly and went along. The public, however, misinterpreted the reasons for Canada's success. To Canadians, peacekeeping proved that their country's military were not war-makers, but quasi-neutral peacekeepers; the Americans fought wars while Canadians kept the peace, or so said a public that had seemingly forgotten the two world wars and other conflicts. Canadians could not grasp that their forces were so useful in United Nations operations because they were well-trained and equipped for war a long way from home — they had air and sea transport, good communications, and as troops trained for fighting they could readily step down to peacekeeping duty. African and Asian countries, some more acceptable than Canada at the UN, had none of these capacities. Moreover, Canadians invariably forgot that peacekeeping usually served Western interest and that often it could only be carried out thanks to American logistical support.

During the Mulroney years, the unified force created by Paul Hellyer fell out of favour in Ottawa, and soon distinctive uniforms appeared — at great cost, generals and admirals complained, when modern equipment was in such short supply. Personnel numbers continued to decline, slipping under 80,000 by the early 1990s and the defence budget, a large-sounding \$12.8 billion but only 1.9 percent of GNP, proved insufficient to equip the land forces, for example, with modern tanks, armoured personnel carriers and other equipment needed on peacekeeping duties in Bosnia. The air force, flying CF-18 fighters, was better equipped (except in its critical long-range transport capacity) and combat-ready, as it demonstrated in the Gulf War in 1991-2,



*Canadian troops arrive at Sarajevo airport, Bosnia, July 1992 on a peacekeeping mission.
From "Shadows of War, Faces of Peace", Key Porter Books, 1992.*

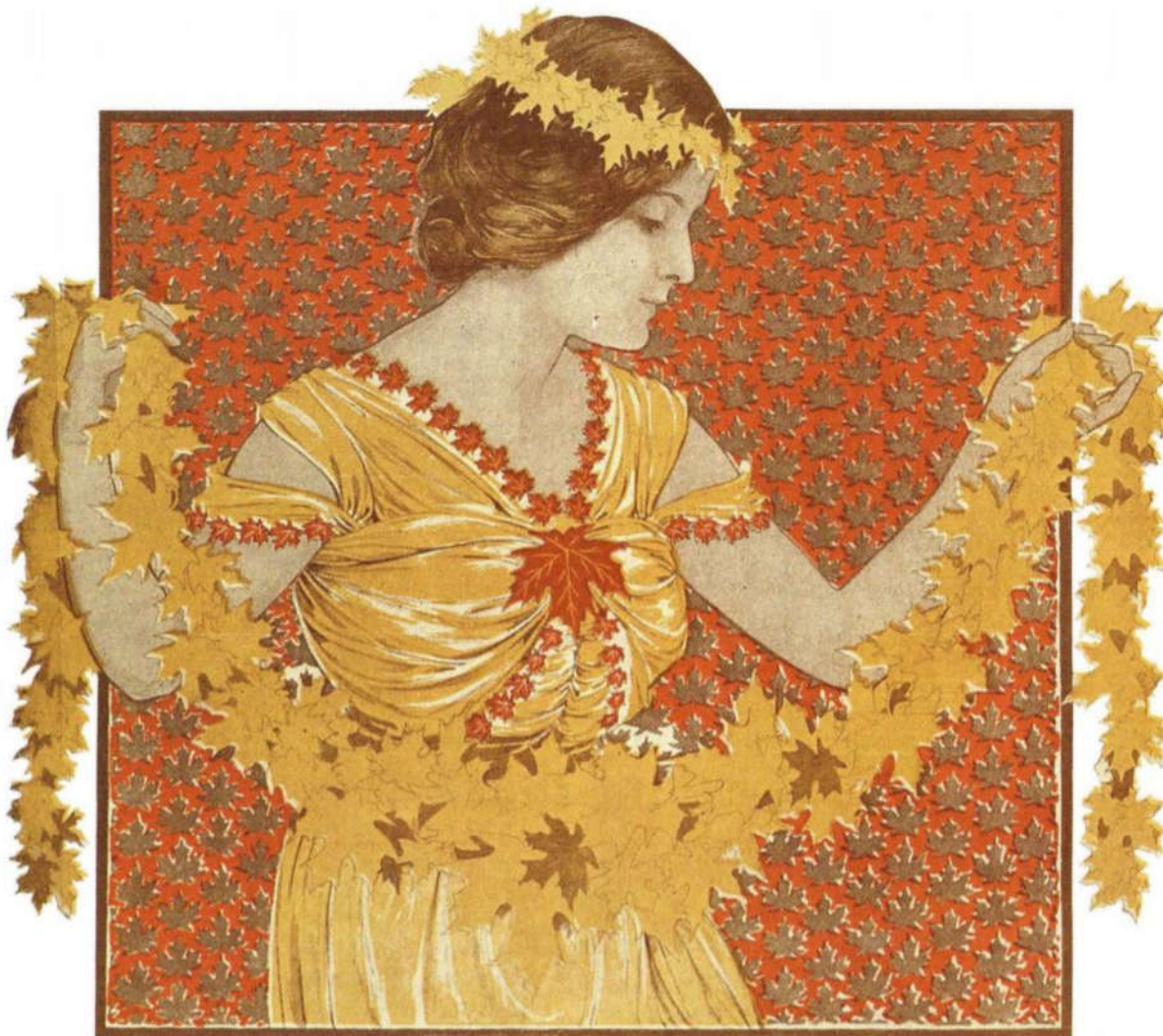
though with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, there was some question as to the fighters' utility. The navy, a flood of long-awaited modern frigates coming off the ways to replace its rusted-out hulls, seemed well-equipped for the next century, though again many criticized its anti-submarine warfare emphasis. A defence review instituted in 1994 by the new Liberal government of Jean Chretien will set the course for the future.

The Canadian military record in this century, therefore, must be adjudged a mixed one. In war, Canada played a large and distinguished role as a member of the anti-German alliances. In peace, the record was less glorious. Canada willingly enlisted in the American-led anti-Soviet effort and for four decades kept troops in Europe as a token of its commitment. For most of that period, token was the apt description. At home, moreover, protected by geography and de facto by the Americans, Canadian governments and their voters largely left the task of defending the continent to a few dedicated servicemen and to the United States military. Happily, no war threatened that shaky edifice, but that was as much a tribute to luck as to good management.

Now with military alliances in decay, with NATO desperately searching for a role in the absence of any credible threat, Canada seems unsure of its future course. The armed forces clearly are destined to shrink further as budgets are rolled back. If at times Canada appears

determined to pretend that the 1990s are the 1920s, in fact this is probably illusory. Military professionalism remains strong, and the officers, men, and women of the Canadian Armed Forces are certainly infinitely more skilled at their trades than in the interwar years or at any time in Canadian history except the 1950s. Peacekeeping, surely a growth industry, is likely to keep the military in existence, however attenuated and however much reservists might have to be pressed into service to fill the ranks. Moreover, Canada's geographical position all but guarantees that defence strength and spending must meet at least the bare minimum to guarantee that the United States will not insist on assuming responsibility for the defence of Canadian territory, airspace and sea approaches. "Defence against help," as one political scientist called it, is an inglorious way of describing a carefully calculated effort to escape national humiliation. But Canada's military in this century has often scrambled for survival and demonstrated its capacity to use whatever it must to continue to exist. ♦

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IN THE CENTURY'S TIME MACHINE

Becoming Canadian

By J.M. Bumsted

Time-travelling is a common fictional device. Michael J. Fox in *Back to the Future* did it the easy way, returning to a past a least partially familiar. Moving to the future would be much more disorienting. The time-traveller to the future would be immediately struck by the technology and perhaps the very pace of life. But were an individual living in Canada in 1900 to be transported to 1994, what changes beneath the obvious would he or she find most striking? Perhaps we can begin to answer this question by taking a bird's eye view of the country in 1900 and 1994 respectively.

Canada in 1900

Canada at the turn of the century had pretty much reached its present physical boundaries, less Newfoundland, which would remain an independent Crown Colony until 1949. But the country in 1900 was still sparsely populated, with only 5,371,000 inhabitants, nearly half of whom lived east of Ontario. Still largely a rural nation of northern European ethnic background (60% British, 34% French), Canada's religious values were still strong and Christian (over 60% Protestant). One in five Canadians lived on a family farm. The social assumptions of the Canadian people were still rural and male-dominated, often patriarchal. The ideal woman remained at home to raise a family; formal divorce was virtually unknown.

Society was overtly racist. It saw social responsibility chiefly in individualistic or at best private corporatistic terms involving church, voluntary body, trade union, or fraternal organization. Canadians were young on average, with a majority under the age of 21 and only a small minority beyond normal working age. The life expectancy of a male newborn was considerably less than fifty, of a female slightly higher. Birth and infant mortality rates were both extremely high.

Although nearly all Canadians were literate by 1900, education beyond primary level was still the monopoly of a small elite minority. Indeed, although an earlier deferential society had broken down, elites still dominated in most areas of endeavour. In national terms, the two principal cultural groups were the "British" Canadians and the "French" Canadians. Both groups of Canadians made most of their own culture at home or in the immediate community, and culture-making was profoundly amateur in nature. Very few Canadians made a living from cultural pursuits. The question of whether there was a Canadian culture was often asked, but not often agonized over. Most Canadians accepted as given that their cultures were derivative from Europe and America. While Canada at the opening of the twentieth century was fascinated with technology, constantly adopting new forms of it, technological innovation had not yet become ubiquitous, particularly in the rural

communities. The pace of life for most Canadians was still relatively slow most of the time, little altered from that of the eighteenth century.

Canada in 1994

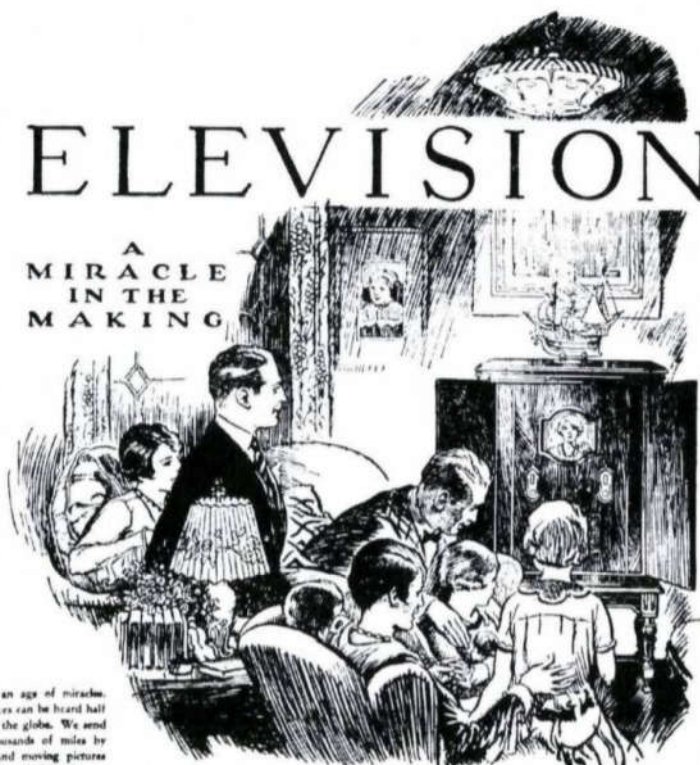
By 1994 Canada had a population of 29 million. While this figure still gave it one of the lowest population densities of any nation in the world, Canadians by the last decade of the century entertained a profound sense of overcrowding. This was because the nation had become thoroughly urbanized and suburbanized, the bulk of its population living in a few very large urban conglomerates. Noise, traffic congestion, pollution, parking problems, crime — all contributed to the pressure upon space, and to the desire to escape to one's own plot of green on the suburban fringes. Only one in 30 Canadians actually lived on a farm, fewer still on farms family owned and operated. The traditional fishing industry of Atlantic Canada had collapsed almost entirely. Regionally the nation had moved steadily westward, with only 35% of its population by the 1991 census residing east of Ontario and over 25% (as opposed to 14% in 1900) west of Lake Superior. Despite the entrance of Newfoundland into Confederation, less than 10% of the nation resided in the Atlantic region.

Canadian ethnicity was far more complex than in 1900, with increasingly few Canadians able to identify themselves with a single ethnic background and with many more people having arrived from outside northern Europe and more recently the "Third World." Despite the ethnic shift, the percentage of Canadians speaking English actually increased and French-speakers commensurately decreased. By the 1991 census, the largest single religious denomination was Roman Catholicism, and more Canadians (3,386,000) described themselves as having no religion than belonged to any one of the major Protestant denominations. Non-Christians had become a significant minority, representing over 5% of the population. The Canadian population was getting collectively and progressively older, with "senior citizens" by far its fastest-growing segment. The aging of the "Baby Boom" generation (the products of that demographic blip between 1940 and 1965 when the birth rate significantly if temporarily increased) would only increase the number of seniors over the ensuing years. Apart from the Baby Boom, the birth rate had gotten progressively lower, by 1970 reaching a stage where it could no longer replace the existing population.

While males still dominated Canadian society, explicitly-articulated social assumptions no longer supported that dominance. Well over half of Canadian women of working age were gainfully employed. Well over half of all Canadian families would experience at least one marital breakup and divorce, often initiated by the

female. Racism, like sexism hardly eradicated, had also ceased to be socially respectable. In an equally profound shift, social responsibility had become the business of the state at all levels of government, and many

if not other groups. In social terms, the century had in general seen a reduction in the measurable differences between French Canada and the remainder of the country, brought about in large measure by the gradual



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Television was just a blue gleam in the eye of Canadian General Electric when this ad appeared in 1929, but by the time the century was half over "the box" had altered Canadian life forever.

in 1994 were seeking ways to reverse the trend. A secondary school education had by 1994 become virtually universal in Canada, and a university education had become the normal expectation rather than a pretension of only an elite. A general social levelling had seen the exclusivity of elites substantially reduced, if not eliminated, in almost all arenas of life. The business elite, particularly within the province of Quebec, had been penetrated by substantial numbers of French Canadians

industrialization, urbanization, and modernization of French Canadian society.

If the social gap between Anglophone and Francophone Canada had narrowed, the cultural gap had probably gotten wider. This had been brought about by a substantial increase in the French-Canadian realization of the importance of culture and the conscious attempt to safeguard it, while Anglo-Canadian culture seemed ever more diffuse and susceptible to outside influences.

Despite an increased awareness by its cultural leadership of the need for national distinctiveness, Anglo-Canadian culture had a less recognizable shape than in 1900. Culture-making in Canada had by 1994 professionalized and become Big Business. New technologies brought the international (and especially American) world of what was called "popular culture" into the nation's living rooms. The matter of a distinctive culture had been addressed far more aggressively and successfully by Quebec than by the remainder of Canada, assisted by the province's sense of siege and its linguistic separation from the United States. Technology and technological change had become so overt that they seemed to many the most dominant feature of modern life. Certainly technology had greatly increased the pace of life experienced by the average Canadian, as well as the quantity of information to which he or she could potentially be exposed. Not surprisingly, stress management had become an important medical problem.

The foregoing summary only touches the very tip of the iceberg that was and is social and cultural Canada. But it does indicate some of the profound changes that might strike our fictional time-traveller. These changes, and the developments that brought them about, now need to be examined in more detail. In a relatively brief space, only a few of the forces remaking Canadian society and culture can be explored.

Rural Canada

Despite the agricultural settlement of the West, the twentieth century has witnessed the precipitous decline of a rural Canada still dominant in 1900. The farming and resource sectors of the economy — both centred in rural Canada — have been unable to provide employment and opportunity for the younger generation. Although one of the major social values of the agricultural world was stability, no institution could be inherently less stable than the family farm. It followed a predictable life cycle throughout the entire era of settlement. One generation of energetic young people would establish the farm. In a highly patriarchal environment the farm would succeed, chiefly upon the deferred expectations and enforced labour of the children of the proprietors. The male children of the initial founders might be able to inherit parts of the original holding as their own farms, but within no more than two generations, the farm had been subdivided and expanded as much as was possible. Most of the children, including all the females, would have to leave either to establish their own farms elsewhere or to take up work in a town or a city. In 1900 French Canada was considerably more rural than the Canadian population as a whole, while by 1994 both it and English Canada had virtually identical urban profiles.

Gaining access to new farms became virtually impossible over the course of the century, partly because we

ran out of new agricultural frontiers to open. Large numbers of rural Canadians made their way to the ever-expanding Canadian cities, where existed both job opportunities and a more exciting lifestyle. The refugees from the rural regions have, in recent years, included thousands of First Nations people leaving their reserves, as well as fishermen from Atlantic Canada and woods-people everywhere. Small towns which serviced rural Canada have been depopulated as well. The process of internal migration, which still continues in the 1990s, has meant that Canadians have always been a people constantly on the move. Mobility, and its associated social manifestations — poverty, family breakdown, lawlessness — have been endemic in Canadian society since the days of earliest settlement on the moving frontier. Scholars are hardly agreed on the dynamic of the relationship between mobility and these social characteristics. Some would argue that the highly mobile are a self-selecting universe of the unsuccessful, likely to perpetuate themselves. But there is a general consensus that poverty, family breakdown, lawlessness, and even violence have always been present in Canadian society. There was no "Golden Age" of social stability in Canada, and statistical increases in such things as family



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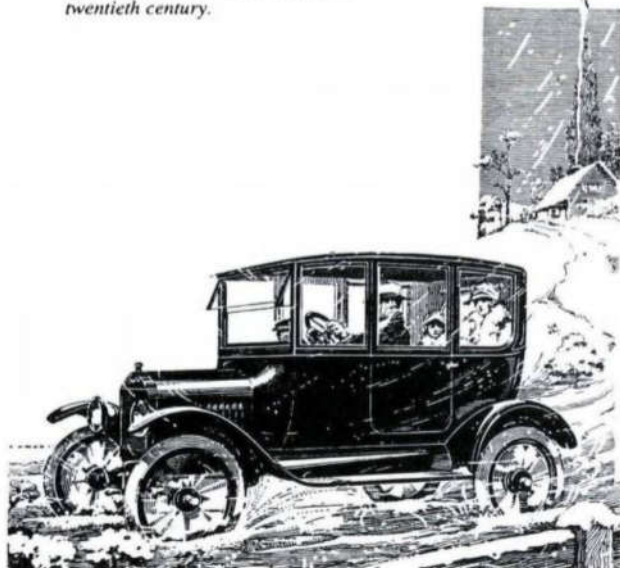
Free farmland was already growing scarce when this ad appeared in "The Canadian Magazine" in January 1912. Later in the century most immigrants would go directly to the cities.

abuse (sexual or physical) or crime (against people or property) reflect altered definitions and reporting mechanisms rather than a deterioration of conditions.

Canadian rural society has always espoused the social values of family, equality, and stability within a cultural context of a romanticized pastoral affection for nature and the outdoor life. But as much Canadian fiction of the twentieth century demonstrates, those values were seldom achieved. More common was a pattern of patriarchal male domination, often exploitation, of long-suffering females, with children of both sexes desperate to escape the suffocating ravages of hypocrisy, tension, and conflict. As for the pastoral values, they remain deeply embedded in the Canadian psyche, manifesting themselves in such ways as the desperate urge for the green lawns of the suburbs or for a summer cottage on a placid lake — or in the purchase of coffee table books and calendars with colour photographs of idyllic landscapes. Since the turn of the century, however, the great Canadian wilderness has increasingly become both a region of the mind and a physical retreat to which one only briefly escapes.

In physical terms, particularly of the amenities of modern life, rural Canada is no longer as different from urban Canada as it was at the turn of the century. In 1900 farm kids could be astounded by the city's electric lights, paved streets, and running water, and they could often still be pretty impressed by these features up to the 1950s. Rural Canada's major roads were paved in

The arrival of the "family car" and the advent of paved roads changed life in both town and country in the twentieth century.



the period immediately after the Second World War, and rural electrification was largely completed between 1945 and 1960. Those same years saw the virtual elimination of outdoor toilets — the notorious "biffy" or outhouse — as well. Many a provincial government based its electoral success on the material improvements it brought to its rural districts. Radio and subsequently television helped to connect rural regions spiritually with the outside world. Despite — or perhaps because of — this era of improvement, the numbers of rural inhabitants decreased absolutely from 3,117,000 in 1941 to 1,420,000 in 1971, with the decline most apparent in those provinces still dominated by agriculture.

Technological changes in farming often preceded the introduction of modern amenities to the farmer's home. The Canadian farmer has always been eager to embrace labour-saving machinery, since farming is labour-intensive and a guaranteed source of labour has always been problematic. Technology enabled the Canadian farm to get bigger and its work force smaller. Most farmers had begun employing mechanized harvesting by the beginning of the century. The adoption of the internal combustion engine was a bit slower. Most farmers probably bought an automobile before they purchased a tractor, often obtaining their first car during the boom years of the Great War. The tractor achieved full acceptance during the 1920s, although horses were still commonly used until well after the Second World War. The introduction of marketing boards for farm commodities in the 20s and 30s would gradually produce a farming elite composed of those who inherited land and licenses to market. Others continued to farm at their peril, increasingly kept on their farms only by government assistance.

Canada's rural regions have been and still remain the stronghold of the nation's traditional ethnic groups, the Anglo Saxon and the French-Canadian. Immigrants to Canada in this century have largely eschewed settlement in rural areas. The result is that rural Canada, in both Quebec and the remainder of the country, is populated almost entirely by native-born inhabitants whose roots in the country go back a number of generations.

Urban Canada

The city in Canada, as elsewhere, had always enjoyed an ethos of receptivity to rapid change and development, usually labelled "progress". It not only served to amass population for economic purposes, but for social and cultural ones as well. The symphony orchestra, the ballet company, the professional sports team, the daily newspaper, were all unthinkable out of the urban environment. So too was the typical Canadian university, with its large numbers of non-residential students commuting to their homes or to off-campus apartments. Large-scale health-care facilities, including teaching hospitals, were only possible in the urban setting. The twentieth-century Canadian city was also the home of



These Winnipeg school children, photographed by Lewis Foote in the 1920s, represent 21 ethnic groups.

the ethnic neighbourhood, each with its own ambience and dynamic. Canadian cities did not for the most part proceed quite so far down the path of urban deconstruction as had their American counterparts. "Urban renewal" and the bulldozing of entire neighbourhoods in favour of freeways and huge public building complexes made some inroads in Toronto and Montreal, but were stopped even there in the late 1960s through public opposition. Canadian cities were in the 1990s regarded as still "liveable", although troubled by escalating crime rates, especially crimes against property such as break-ins and automobile theft, as well as by the abandonment of the downtown core.

Canadian cities have always drawn their population from two sources: internal migration from a countryside unable to accommodate its own expanding population and immigration from overseas. The cities had always been the centres of ethnic complexity in Canada, and by the 1980s they had become the centres of racial complexity and conflict as well. Despite government pronouncements and the Charter of Rights, many Canadians have remained suspicious of those of different skin colour, culture, or religion. Not all the racial minorities in a Canadian city were foreign-born,

it must be added. One of the largest minority components in a number of Canadian cities became the First Nations and Metis groups. Increasingly over the century, newcomers to Canada have gravitated toward the city, partly because they themselves have come from urban environments, partly because of employment opportunity, partly because of the unwelcoming nature of Canadian rural society. By 1994 the number of distinctive ethnic categories in Canada's cities had multiplied and changed to include, in addition to the so-called "charter Europeans", the "non-charter Europeans", visible Third World minorities, and the First Nations.

The city, as it always had been, was still in many ways the crucible for moulding newcomers within its boundaries into the industrialized world of North America. Those who had successfully assimilated, whether immigrant or migrant, often moved from city centre to the suburbs, leaving behind a number of ethnic enclaves of varying economic circumstances but heavily weighted towards the poor. The sheer size and complexity of the enclaves combined with the proportion of newcomers resident in the central cities made assimilation to Canadian society and culture extremely

problematic, however, particularly since the meaning of that society and culture was itself being constantly altered under the weight and impact of the newcomers and the debates their arrival had inspired. Not all Canadians were as sure as they once were that all the newcomers could be — or should be — turned into good little assimilated Anglophones or Francophones, with their values firmly entrenched in the heritage of Western Europe. One of the symbolic ways this uncertainty manifested itself was over the question of whether traditional headgear — such as the Sikh turban — could be worn by RCMP officers or within the halls of the Canadian Legion. Another was the debate over Bill 101 in Quebec, which legislated that education in the province should be conducted almost exclusively in French. What the alternatives were to assimilation was not in the short run at all clear, however. Multiculturalism had not yet positively produced a truly pluralistic Canada, but had only negatively shaken the foundations of older assumptions about the nature of Canadian society and culture.

Suburban Canada

The Canadian city of the twentieth century also grew in area and population through the incorporation of its suburbs into the metropolitan region. The suburb was not a new phenomenon, but only after the Second World War did it become a major socio-cultural one, producing a new lifestyle. The modern Canadian suburb grew because its housing was less expensive (being new, there were few services and little infrastructure) and its inhabitants wanted green grass. Suburbia was less a geographical than a mental space, characterized by an emphasis on home, family, and school which made sense in the postwar era of the baby boom. Life in suburbia required a clear appreciation of gender roles and was extremely child-centred. Canadians in the suburbs did not think of themselves as social pioneers, but they were creating a brave new world anchored by the automobile, the television set, the shopping mall, the barbecue, and the power lawn mower. The suburb became the symbol for the mass middle-class society which Canada became in the course of the twentieth century.

Immigration and Ethnicity

The twentieth century has witnessed some profound changes in the origins of Canada's immigrants, and thus in the composition of Canada's population. At the turn of the century, most immigration to Canada was still British. We are now beginning to appreciate that British newcomers were not themselves homogeneous, speaking many dialects and importing several national and many regional loyalties into their new homes. But the Great War of 1914-18 could still be fought in defence of the "Empire", with both French-Canadians

DON'T GET A DIVORCE

Few women want to go out because they hate their homes. It is because they need a change. Those wives who are in the home all day find the walls boring at night and they crave a glimpse of the outside world — but on the other hand, husbands after a hard day at the office are tired and wish to stay at home.



COMPROMISE

Come to the nearest R. S. Williams store, select a Rogers or Majestic radio and have it sent home tomorrow, and from then on bring the outside world into your home and enjoy the comforts of your easy chair too.

Get a
Rogers-Majestic
Radio

R. S. Williams Co.
F. A. TRESTRAIL
145 Yonge St.

Established
Since 1849

Everyone eventually got a radio, as this 1920s ad suggests, but divorce increased anyway.

and "enemy aliens" ignored and even suppressed. As late as the Great War it was still legitimate to think of Canada as composed of two charter groups, with First Nations and other groups very much a marginalized minority.

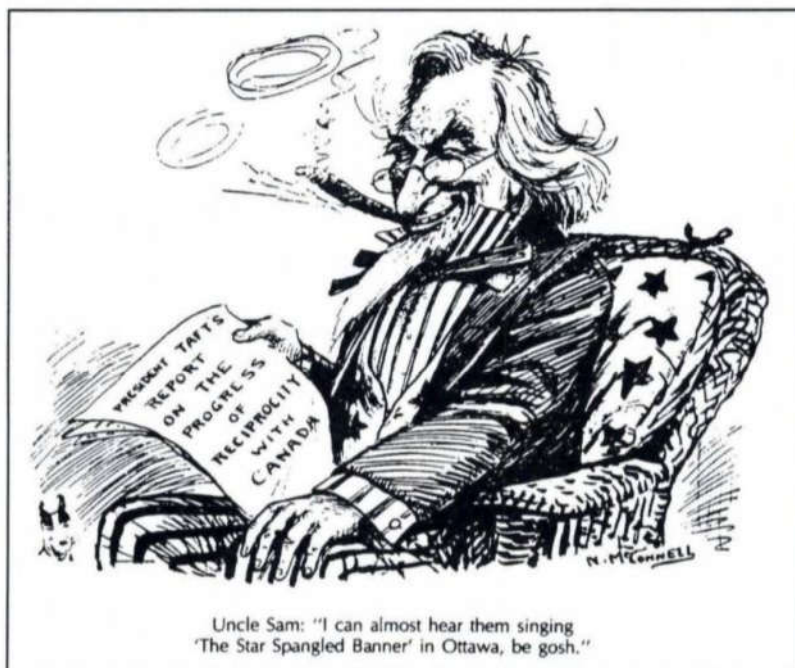
Over the first seventy years of the century, British immigration would turn gradually but perceptibly into a flow of people from Southern and Eastern Europe, chiefly moving into the cities of Central Canada and especially Ontario. That flow became a torrent after 1946. From 1946 to 1971 over 3.5 million immigrants arrived in Canada, fewer and fewer each year from the British Isles. Only fifteen percent of that immigration went to Quebec, and less than five percent was French-speaking. Between 1946 and 1981, the population of Toronto more than doubled to two and a half million people, 43 percent of whom had been born outside the country. Over 300,000 of this population had been born in Italy. After 1968 the origins of Canadian immigration further shifted. In 1968 two-thirds of the immigrants to Canada still came from Europe. By 1984 the European fraction was down to one-quarter, and dropping regularly. In 1987, immigrants to Canada from Europe totalled only 8,547 of 152,000. By 1984 half of the annual immigration came from Asia, and by 1987 over ninety percent originated in the so-called Third World, including Africa and the Caribbean.

The nature of racism in Canada was profoundly altered over the course of the century. In 1900, the nation at both the level of government and at that of popular opinion was extremely hostile to any group that could not be easily assimilated into an existing

Canadian society exclusively Western European and Christian in origin. Those excluded included the First Nations, blacks, East Indians, Asians, and Jews. The government could not keep out the First Nations, although it moved as many as possible to remote reserves. But it positively excluded other minorities through selective immigration policies. As late as the eve of the Second World War, the Canadian government was systematically preventing Jewish refugees from Nazism from entering Canada, as it had earlier blocked American blacks from Oklahoma, Japanese, Chinese, and East Asians. The big changes for the federal gov-

tual qualities, nowhere more so than in Quebec, where the parish curé was the stuff of legend.

By the end of the century, the state of religion in Canada had been transformed. Protestantism, like its rural strongholds, lost considerable ground relative to Roman Catholicism, which grew especially outside French Canada. A number of major Protestant denominations, chiefly the Methodists, most Baptists, most Presbyterians, and Congregationalists joined in the United Church of Canada in 1925. Despite calls from the United Church and other denominations for both spiritual renewal and churches which were socially rel-



Fear of American domination was a common Canadian emotion throughout this century. This October 1910 cartoon by McConnell in the "Toronto News" helped defeat Laurier in the 1911 "Reciprocity Election".

ernment came in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when Canadian immigration policy adopted the so-called "point system" and ceased to be blatantly racist. Since that time, Canada has officially been "colour blind," and indeed in its attitude toward race and racism (particularly as embodied in the 1982 Charter of Rights), public policy and rhetoric has probably often been in advance of public opinion on these issues.

Religion and Morality

Canada in 1900 was a country in which Christianity still mattered. The various Protestant denominations were dominant outside French Canada, particularly in the rural regions, and Roman Catholicism overwhelmingly influential within it. Clergymen were important community leaders, revered for their moral and intellec-

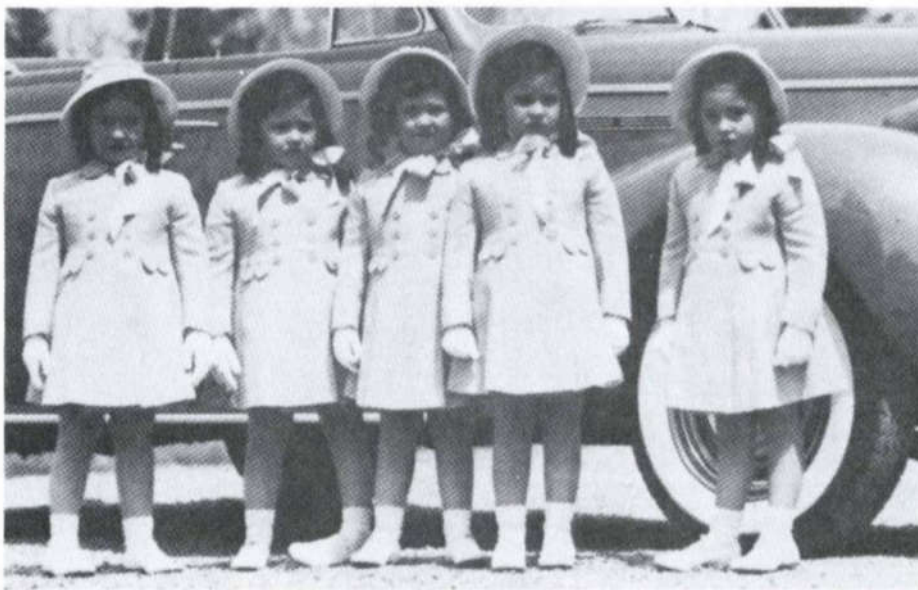
evant, Canadian Christianity — after a brief resurgence following the Second World War — joined all forms of organized and revealed religion in industrialized society in losing credibility and popularity over the course of the century. The pressures came from forces of secularization and modernization. An ever-increasing number of Canadians became nominal Christians only. Church attendance collapsed, particularly after the Second World War, even in French Canada. The progress of the Catholic Church's loss of moral dominance in French Canada could be documented in Quebec's declining birth rate. Virtually the only exception in the deterioration was among fundamentalist Protestant sects, which flourished particularly in areas of social upheaval associated with rapidly-expanding population. As traditional Christianity tottered in Canada, atheism, agnosti-

cism and indifference were joined by non-Christian religious faiths imported by the new immigrants.

Along with the decline in organized Christianity came a profound shift in a morality which had always been defined and upheld by its teachings. The fundamentalists became the principal group still prepared to allow the state to legislate morality on a large scale, but they were a distinct minority. On only a few issues — such as abortion — could the moralists mount much of a campaign. Most Canadians appeared to agree with Pierre Trudeau when he declared in 1968 that the state should stay out of the bedrooms of the nation. A moral belief system that seemed out of step with popular practice had been finally challenged in the 1960s, and much of it quietly collapsed with a whimper.

The old taboos against sexual explicitness, obscenity, and graphic violence in the media virtually disappeared. Canadians began to talk and write openly about

changes in moral practice that society had already generally accepted in the course of the great "Sexual Revolution" of the 1960s. That revolution was abruptly ended in the 1980s, when it finally became clear that prices had to be paid for sexual adventurism. Earlier outbreaks of sexually transmitted diseases, which appeared treatable with wonder drugs, were replaced by the emergence of the HIV virus and AIDS, which to this writing have not proved so amenable. Demands for a renewal of state intervention in moral matters became justified in terms of protection from violence and disease rather than in terms of traditional moral values. As for the state, it has increasingly come to see "sin" as something less to be eliminated than to be harnessed for financial revenue. Governments not only came to tax cigarettes and alcoholic beverages, but now even ran legalized gambling dens and reckoned the profits as an integral part of their budgets.



The Dionne quintuplets were Canada's sweethearts in the 1930s, but they did not set the fashion. Most Canadian families were having far fewer children than the Dionnes.

sexual intercourse, contraception, abortion, premarital sex, and homosexuality. Divorces, which in 1900 numbered less than 100 across the entire country, reached over 86,000 in 1987. The legal basis for much social change became established in the late 1960s. Canadian divorce law was greatly liberalized in 1968, legalized abortions became possible in 1969, as did homosexual relationships between consenting adults. In 1970 a Royal Commission actually scouted the possibility of legalizing marijuana, although the new liberality fell short of such a step.

New legal attitudes toward divorce, abortion, and homosexuality all merely reflected, rather than led,

Life and Death

Falling birth rates were in part attributable to the seizure by Canadian women of control over their own bodies and their own destinies. Birth rates began falling in Canada (outside Quebec) around the turn of the century and continued to drop in the 1920s and 1930s. The increases of the period 1941-1965 were part of the demographic phenomenon which has become known as the "Baby Boom," in which there occurred a dramatic and constant increase in the number of Canadian children below the age of 14. These children — in a series of waves that demographers call "cohorts" — began going through each stage of life in numbers which put

heavy pressures successively on housing, the educational system, and then the work force. Before 1970 the Baby Boomers had their chief impact upon the educational system, hitting the school systems in the 1950s and the universities in the 1960s. They hit the job market after 1970, pressuring the employment system through sheer numbers and by their qualifications and expectations (which for females were little different than for males). The largest cohort reached mid-career in the mid-1980s and began thinking seriously about retirement in the early 1990s. The needs, demands, and expectations of the Baby Boom generations have dominated much of Canadian society since 1945, and they have not yet completed their life cycles.

By the 1990s, the life cycles of the Baby Boomers would finally force Canadians to pay some serious attention to the problems of aging. The process by which the Canadian population has increasingly been made up of older age groups began at the beginning of the century with substantial changes in the nature of life expectancy associated with improved medical treatment and a higher standard of living, including better sanitary facilities. As late as 1921, the median age for death in Canada was 41.3 for males and 43.5 for females, although such a low average resulted from very heavy rates of infant mortality; further life expectancy if one survived to age 20 was 49.1 years for males and 49.2 years for females. By 1946 the median age for death had

reached 63.1 for males and 65.3 for females, and there would be further increases in the postwar period, so that by 1986 median age of death stood at 73.0 for males and 79.7 for females, while further life expectancy at age 20 in 1986 had risen to 54.3 for males and 60.7 for females.

Two obvious points stand out in these figures. One is the increasing discrepancy between males and females, reflecting in large measure continuing differences in gender roles in Canadian society. The other point is the rapid increase in the numbers of Canadians who can expect to live not only to retirement but a long time beyond its normal limits. Immigration (chiefly by the young) and the Baby Boom kept the proportion of post-retirement elderly in the total population down and the trend obscured until the 1970s. By the 1990s, however, dealing with Canada's rapidly increasing numbers of elderly had replaced educating Canada's relatively stable number of young as the most contentious and intractable social problem facing the nation. The movement of the Baby Boomers — who historically have demanded more and better — into the status of elderly citizens is only on the verge of happening. As a matter of public health care policy alone, the problems of an aging population are enormous. Canadian society has never before placed much of a premium on caring for its elderly. But ever-increasing numbers of Canadians are finding that they have not only new responsibilities



Canadian "Baby Boomers" went mad over The Beatles rock group in the 1960s. Here Vancouver policemen attempt to keep hysterical fans away from "the fab four".

Vancouver Sun

to children who have difficulty entering the work force at acceptable career levels, but also to aged parents who do not yet require institutionalized nursing care. To this writing senior citizens have not yet emerged as a major political force at the polls except perhaps as fiscal conservatives concerned to lower taxes by reducing government spending and deficit financing.

Social Rights and the Conscience of the State

At the opening of the twentieth century, Canadians were protected from the vicissitudes and vagaries of life mainly through their own efforts (and those of their families), through private institutions (such as fraternal organizations or churches), and through charity. As late as the 1930s, an individual who lost his job would have to pauperize himself before applying to a charitable agency or a municipality for temporary help or relief, which would be granted as a boon rather than because of any inherent right to assistance.

of the major reasons that virtually every turn-of-the-century Canadian belonged to at least one fraternal organization was because such institutions provided both private insurance plans and were known to look after their less fortunate members. Private responsibility carried with it the notion that hard work, thrift, and foresight should be rewarded and their absence deservedly punished.

Gradually there began to develop in highly prosperous industrialized nations the concept that there might be minimum conditions of life to which citizens might legitimately aspire. The century saw both significant increases in both the conception of the minimum and in the concomitant expectation that the state would initially define the minimum and latterly provide it. The Canadian federal government only gradually became a more important player here. Given their constitutional responsibility for these matters, it was hardly surprising



The Rowell-Sirois Commission had a stormy voyage, but the reforms suggested in its report were shelved or postponed due to opposition at home and war abroad.

Any caregiving in old age was done by the family or the community on a purely voluntary basis. The elderly, like the unemployed, were expected to save for a rainy day. Not surprisingly, many Canadians tried to employ the inheritance process to guarantee that they would be looked after by the potential heirs. A few pension systems were privately administered, and governments certainly pensioned their own higher officials and military officers. Health care was entirely in private hands. One

that the provinces began legislating social minimums in education and then in health care, the latter mainly by regulating abuse. By 1914 the Social Service Council of Canada, recently organized, held its first national congress, debating issues of increased social responsibility with many examples from Europe and the United States. Before the First World War several provinces had introduced workmen's compensation legislation to provide compulsory income protection from work-related

accidents as a matter of right. The Great War saw the introduction of mothers' "pension" or allowances, and a variety of social programmes to assist veterans, again as social rights.

But the Great Depression for the first time really made Canadians aware that the vicissitudes of life did not necessarily bear much relationship to virtue or foresight. Many Canadians lost their invested savings in stock market crashes and their jobs in a paralyzed economy. Farmers found themselves unable to market their crops for sufficient cash to recover the cost of cultivation. Not only did the Great Depression demonstrate to Canadians the essential capriciousness of life, but the constitutional impediments to its improvement. The British North America Act had been written to govern an essentially rural society with a very limited concept of public responsibility for health and welfare. Such relatively unimportant matters were powers given to the provincial governments, which in turn often assigned them to the municipalities. These levels of government also had very limited powers of taxation. The federal Parliament did manage to pass an Old Age Pensions Act in 1927 — still involving a means test — which achieved national, if limited, coverage by 1936. But most social assistance was stymied in the 1930s by constitutional haggling among the various levels of government. The Rowell-Sirois Commission in 1940 recommended that unemployment compensation and a contributory pension scheme needed to be nationally administered by the federal government, and other social services remaining provincial responsibilities should be roughly equalized by a National Adjustment Grant. The Commission's recommendations were largely shelved because of the Second World War, but improved social benefits for Canadians were regarded by the bulk of the electorate as one of the priorities of any postwar reconstruction.

The war itself greatly increased government power and authority, particularly at the federal level, and Ottawa became aware of the values of improved social services to the smooth functioning of the economy. The war saw the introduction of federal unemployment insurance (1940) and family allowances (1944), and a Canadian Task Force in 1943 reported to Parliament with a recommendation for a comprehensive social security system for the entire nation. Economic rather than social considerations probably fuelled most of Ottawa's commitment to social security after the war, especially in terms of unemployment compensation and the introduction of a universal old-age pension scheme. By the 1950s, however, social security and health care schemes had become constitutional footballs between Ottawa and the provinces, led by Quebec. But coverage expanded and both levels of government introduced new programmes into the 1970s. No major political

party anywhere in Canada opposed — before the 1980s — either increased social security coverage or the general principle of universality.

Private health insurance schemes supplementing fraternal organizations began in the 1930s. In 1945 the federal government instituted federal-provincial cost-sharing for health services by making grants available for hospital construction. By 1955 five provinces had introduced universal hospital insurance programmes and pressed the federal government for more assistance. Federal assistance encouraged all provinces to adopt universal hospital insurance by 1961. While the federal government studied further reform, Saskatchewan adopted universal medical-care insurance, fighting a bitter strike by the doctors in the process. In 1964 a federal Royal Commission recommended a universal medical insurance programme based on the recently-achieved Saskatchewan model, which allowed doctors to remain in private practice but to receive specified and regulated fees for service. The Medical Care Act of 1968 provided for federal-provincial cost sharing, with the poorer provinces receiving bigger shares than the rich ones.

The increased social safety net of the century had many implications, both financial and institutional. These included not only the financial costs of social assistance paid directly to or for recipients, but also the enormous costs of administration, which greatly swelled the size of both the federal and provincial civil services and created what many regarded as an unmanageable bureaucracy. By the 1980s the concept of universality came under attack and the concept of accountability was introduced. By the 1990s the whole social security system was under attack for its cost, with the Liberal government in Ottawa attempting to reform it.

The Status of Women

An improved status for women, striving for absolute equality with men and achieving it at least in the eyes of the state and the law, was one of the major accomplishments of the century. Gains for women came as the result of two feminist campaigns, the first one mounted between 1870 and 1920 (with the right to vote the ultimate achievement) and the second between the mid-1960s and the present.

The first feminist campaign began with the attempt to gain equality before the law. It had a long way to go, for women (especially married women) had very few rights at all as late as the period of Canadian Confederation. Unless specified by written contract in advance of marriage, a wife could not own property, control her own body, or exercise any formal authority over her children. A woman's sexuality was merely another form of property owned by men, as the law of seduction and a woman's legal inability to regulate her own fertility well demonstrated. The greatest achievements of the legal



Throughout the century increasing numbers of Canadian women enjoyed the benefits of higher education. These young women are from the class of 1931, Dalhousie University, Halifax.

reformers came in gaining acceptance for the right of married women across Canada to hold property, achieved by 1900, although small gains were made in custody provisions for children. Early feminist reformers also sought access to the professions in Canada, gaining some foothold in the medical and academic professions, but nearly none in the law itself. In 1900, the only practising female attorney in Canada was Clara Brett Martin, who had begun articling in Toronto in 1893. As late as 1918, there were only a dozen female lawyers in all of Canada. The first black woman lawyer would be admitted to the bar only in 1960, the first First Nations woman in 1976.

As well as its unheralded legal battles, the first feminist movement was active in all sorts of social reform movements and in the demand for the vote. To a considerable extent, early feminism may have got itself bogged down in social reform, much of which was associated with women's vaunted nurturing skills rather than with improving the status of women. But early feminism also allowed itself to become transfixed with the goal of the vote, assuming that female suffrage would completely transform Canadian society in all

sorts of ways. The limited value of the achievement of the vote — in some provinces during the Great War, federally in the 1918 election, and in other provinces shortly thereafter — was perhaps best suggested by the quiescence of women for several generations after 1920. Until the 1960s women never voted as a block, electing few of their number to public office, and tolerating a variety of demeaning discriminations in the workforce and in society generally.

The second upsurge of feminism began in the mid-1960s among restless middle-class women who led Canada's women's organizations. They were mainly products of the postwar rise of the suburbs. The Committee on Equality for Women was organized in 1966 from among these organizations to lobby for a Royal Commission on the Status of Women. It took the threat of a protest march by Laura Sabia, president of the Canadian Federation of University Women, to force the Pearson government to create a commission in 1967. Because the government had no agenda for women, it did not limit the terms of reference of the royal commission, which in its report provided the programme that would occupy mainstream feminism for

decades: employment, child-care, and an end to discrimination. For more militant "women's liberationists," control over one's own body became critical, and this movement focussed on matters such as birth control, abortion, and homosexual rights. Although subtle (and occasionally overt) patterns of discrimination still remained in the 1990s, the virtual equality of women with men, at least in the eyes of the law, had been achieved. Ironically enough, one of the most visible remaining examples of discrimination in practice continued to be the legal profession, which was still dominated by men.

Canadian Culture

The proper appreciation of Canadian culture and its meaning has always been difficult. In the first place, the term itself has been a semantic minefield, what one government commission once described as a "general uncertainty of ideas respecting one of the major premises of socio-political thought in Canada." The term "culture", even without the addition of the adjective "Canadian", was employed in a variety of different ways. It was used in an anthropological sense to refer to the force "animating a significant group of individuals united by a common tongue, and sharing the same customs, habits and experiences." It was also employed in a humanistic sense to refer to the creative and intellectual aspects of a society, as well as to the artistic productions and artifacts (books, music, paintings) of that society. Within the realm of the creative and intellectual aspects, distinctions were made between what could be called "high culture" or the "culture of the elite" and "a common culture which is that of the mass." The common culture encompassed folk culture, but also a popular culture dispensed by the media of radio, television, big-circulation journalism, and motion pictures so characteristic of the century. Most Canadians believed, probably quite rightly, that such popular culture over the century was increasingly controlled by the Americans.

In all of these meanings of culture, high political questions were to be found. Perhaps no nation in the Western world faced greater problems in understanding culture than Canada, nor did any nation have a greater need for a conscious cultural policy. Since its founding, Canada had been a nation without a single unifying language and with at least two of what people often called "founding cultures". Moreover, although the culture of French Canada was distinctive and becoming more so over the course of the century, the other founding culture was turning considerably more problematic. In 1900, English-speaking Canada was synonymous with English (or perhaps British) Canada. A certain cultural homogeneity resulted from a common origin in the British Isles, often expressing itself as "Imperialism". It was British Canada which fought the Great War, although this supreme effort helped destroy



National Archives of Canada

Vincent Massey was the first Canadian-born governor-general and also played an important role in the advancement of the arts.

it. Unlike French Canadians, who fairly happily accepted Montreal as their cultural capital, English-speaking Canadians outside Ontario (and perhaps within the province) increasingly resented any suggestion of the cultural dominance of Toronto, and that city's pre-eminence declined, especially after 1945. Moreover, under the weight of changing patterns of immigration, English Canada had become united only by the language it spoke; ethnic origins and their cultural inputs had become far more complex.

While Canada thus lacked anything vaguely resembling a homogeneous national culture at either the humanistic or anthropological level, it was simultaneously more exposed than most nations to external cultural influences, particularly from its behemoth neighbour to the south, the United States, which purveyed first to Canada, and then to the world, a profoundly Americanized popular culture. If nations insulated from the Americans by geography, history, and language could be "cocacola-nized", the situation for Canada — geographically contiguous, historically closely connected, lacking in homogeneity — was alarming for anyone who worried about the national integrity of Canada. Not surprisingly, the Canadian government worked desperately to keep culture separate in the free trade negotiations of the 1980s and 1990s.

Much of the debate over Canadian culture revolved around the assumption that it had to be "distinctive" in style and content in order to be truly valid. Attempting



Jean Gascon was one of Canada's most distinguished men of the theatre as actor and director in both official languages.

to ascertain what was distinctive about Canadian culture was about as problematic as attempting to define the character traits of the "Canadian Identity". Nevertheless, the two quests were obviously related, and became central themes of Canada's cultural life. Although not everyone was persuaded that there had to be a "national genius," self-conscious Canadianism was a frequent phenomenon. Most of what became celebrated as distinctively Canadian achieved this distinction more through content than style. In painting, for example, the Group of Seven adopted a style originated in Scandinavia to the Canadian wilderness landscape. Canadian poets wrote about Canadian nature, Canadian novelists about Canadian society, all in the language and literary styles common to Western Europe and North America.

After the Second World War there occurred a growing international recognition that the old cultural categories and canons of taste had been extremely limited. Artists, critics, and consumers all moved simultaneously to take seriously forms and styles that had been previously regarded as inconsequential, frivolous,

ephemeral — and alien. The barriers that separated high culture, popular culture, and folk culture were in some fields reduced and in others totally demolished. Leonard Cohen, a well-regarded Canadian poet and novelist, became an internationally-acclaimed pop/rock songwriter and singer. Creations in the visual arts by untrained artists of the past were brought out of the cupboard and presented to a receptive public. Many contemporary artists deliberately cultivated a naive style. Immigration broadened the canons of Canadian culture. The novelist arguably Canada's greatest (Joseph Skvorecky) lived in Toronto and published there — in the Czech language. New immigrants also brought new non-European cultures to Canada, and began to insist that Canadian culture had to encompass not only the Western European heritage, but others as well. There was obviously a difference between a multiculturalism as exemplified by the many "folk" celebrations across Canada and a multiculturalism that incorporated non-European sensibilities into its style and aesthetic.

The Rise of Cultural Policy and Cultural Industries

Developments in culture have in many ways paralleled those within society, nowhere more than in the elevation of culture to an important issue of national policy since 1945. Canada had always enjoyed a flourishing artistic life, much of its culture being produced by non-professionals for their own edification and pleasure. In December 1945 a number of arts organizations formed the Canadian Arts Council to lobby governments and politicians, not generally keen about state involvement in culture, to support cultural facilities. The CCF government in Saskatchewan pioneered in 1948 in establishing the first publicly-authorized (and funded) North American arts co-ordinating organization in the Saskatchewan Arts Board, modelled on the British Arts Council. Subsequently, the federal Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, usually known as the Massey Commission, was appointed in 1949 to articulate a national cultural policy, which it confined to elite culture. It recommended the establishment of a public television broadcasting monopoly which would avoid excessive commercialism and would encourage Canadian content and talent, but most of its recommendations dealt with the strengthening of existing national cultural agencies (the National Film Board, the National Gallery, the Public Archives) and the creation of others.

The Massey Commission produced not only a national cultural agenda, but more importantly, gained acceptance for the idea that there should be a national cultural policy. In its wake, the federal government experimented with all the possible strategies of a national cultural policy, ranging from subsidies (the

Canada Council), to protectionism (magazines), to regulation (the Board of Broadcast Governors). Of these policies subsidies clearly worked best, and the Canada Council became a major, if expensive, success story. In the 1960s the Trudeau government added sport and fitness to the Canadian cultural umbrella, and in 1972 introduced the new federal policy of multiculturalism.

At the same time that the federal government was developing a national cultural policy devoted chiefly to fostering a distinctive Canadian identity, provinces and municipalities also became increasingly involved in cultural affairs. The arts became a growth area in the prosperous postwar era as Canadian communities promoted tourism, sought to correct external misconceptions of themselves as cultural wastelands, and celebrated various anniversaries. Quebec established its own ministry of culture in 1961, Jean Lesage pronouncing that "It is by our culture rather than by numbers that we will prevail, ... that our French presence in North America can assert itself." Before the 1970s, cultural policy in Canada at all levels of government was not much characterized by considerations of financial cost. Within the realm of "serious" culture, Canadian governments were prepared to spend large amounts of money to raise cultural levels to international standards, and to a considerable extent they succeeded.

By 1970 every major Canadian city had a symphony orchestra, a professional theatre company, a dance or ballet company, often an opera company, as well as an art gallery and a museum. By 1980 every major Canadian city also had an ice arena and a major league hockey team, and Toronto and Montreal had big league baseball as well. Whether Canadians could continue to afford to pay for these amenities — particularly when public subsidies began drying up — was another matter entirely. But the increase in regional cultural institutions helped create vibrant regional cultural centres right across Canada. An increase in public cultural institutions and in public subsidies also meant a substantial increase in professional culture-makers. Government surveys of artists from 1978 to 1984 indicated that only a small percentage of them actually made a living from sale of their work or talent, and most held other employment, most often in teaching. Nevertheless, over 3,500 visual artists and 3,100 writers could be surveyed. The fact that a relatively large number of Canadians, constantly increasing, even conceived of making a living as professional culture-makers was certainly something new.

So too was the development after 1970 of an emphasis on the economic implications of culture in Canada. Culture not only had moral, intellectual, and aesthetic dimensions, but Canadian bureaucrats began to talk about "cultural industries," measuring jobs and spin-off as well as uplift. At about the same time, Canadian



Alice Munro is one of many Canadian writers known to readers around the world.

governments began to discover how much money they had invested in various aspects of culture and sought ways to control the expenditure. In the ensuing debates over cultural policy, it was clear that culture had become a Big Business. The 1972 *Canada Yearbook* had no separate section or index entries for the Arts or Culture. By the 1990 edition, however, Culture had its own lengthy entry, which emphasized that "the cultural sector is the fourth largest employer in Canada — three times larger than the forestry sector and equal to the agricultural sector." A report by Statistics Canada in 1985 estimated that in the 1981 census there were 208,000 Canadian arts-related jobs, growing at a faster rate than the total labour force in all provinces. The level of public support for arts industries (apart from the universities) was \$4.6 billion in 1986, or about two percent of the total government expenditure on all levels. Whether the level of support was too much or too little depended on whether one looked at numbers or percentages.

In any event, the amount of public expenditure on culture and the importance of the cultural sector of the economy — as well as the debates over cultural policy — help suggest just how much Canada had changed in the course of the twentieth century. Our time-traveller from 1900 would probably find the technological changes the least of his or her problems of adjustment to the world of the twentieth century. ♦

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The 20th Century Hall of Fame

If you cherish a special admiration for Sarah Mallabar, Carlyle Beals, or Allen Sapp, take heart. Someone considers each of them worthy to stand among the great Canadians of our century. On the other hand, if you have a special loathing for Mackenzie King, Pierre Trudeau, or Preston Manning, grit your teeth. They too have each been nominated. But the grand champion of this year's Readers' Choice Survey may be a popular one. The person most nominated as a great twentieth-century Canadian is Thomas Clement "Tommy" Douglas.

To start *The Beaver's* 75th year, we invited readers to nominate the great Canadians of the twentieth century. The rush of replies brought in nominations of almost a hundred different persons (though three group nominations, if taken individually, would bring the total to several millions). Some readers lauded a single "Greatest." Others listed up to five "Among the Greats." The nominees range from prime ministers to private citizens not yet noticed by *Who's Who in Canada*. Fewer than twenty individuals earned more than one nomination.

None was so frequently cited as Tommy Douglas. Douglas was a premier, a party leader, a social gospeller and a social democrat, and the father of medicare in Canada. But our readers most often nominated him for his personal inspiration, for "giving so many Canadians hope" (Charles Hardy, Scarborough, Ontario) or for generating "hope and optimism" (Elnora Smith, Houston, British Columbia). In all, Tommy

Douglas received seven nominations, putting him well ahead of Prime Ministers Laurier, Pearson, and Trudeau, and writer Pierre Berton, who each earned four votes.

Men outnumber women about five to one on the list and few ethnic or racial minority Canadians were mentioned, but all regions of Canada are well represented (on a per capita basis, Manitoba seemed particularly well represented). As might be



T.C. Douglas

expected, politics produced the longest list of nominations. Mackenzie King was most often nominated for his length of tenure ("as a Tory, I make this nomination with reluctance," wrote Joe Martin of Toronto). Pierre Trudeau earned respect for "understanding the country's dual nature" (as John Edward Belliveau, of Shediac, New Brunswick, put it). And Mike Pearson was praised for "a realistic sense of internationalism" (Ross

Tolmie, Vancouver) but also for his personal qualities ("no politician of this century can hold a candle to him," wrote Ron Brown of Toronto).

Other politicians nominated were provincial premiers Sir Richard McBride of British Columbia, Louis Robichaud of New Brunswick, Duff Roblin of Manitoba, and Joey Smallwood of Newfoundland. Governors General Vincent Massey and Jeanne Sauvé both won mention. Senators included social-welfare activist David Croll and intellectual gadfly Eugene Forsey. Tommy Douglas's socialist colleagues James Woodsworth and David Lewis each had an admirer, and so did Canadian Communist leader Tim Buck (for whom Henry W. Allen of Vermilion Bay, Ontario, paraphrased Kipling: "to hear the words of truth he had spoken twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools, then stoop to build them once again.") So did Preston Manning of the Reform Party, hailed for his "quiet and salutary revolution" by Arthur E. Gregg of Penticton, British Columbia. Other nominated politicians were wartime industrial czar C.D. Howe, Ontario Hydro's creator Sir Adam Beck, and Elijah Harper, First Nations leader and scourge of the Meech Lake Accord. Two pioneer women's rights activists, Agnes Macphail and Nellie McClung between them gathered four nominations from four readers — all men.

Unelected figures renowned for their public service included scholar-diplomat O.D. Skelton, who founded the Department of External Affairs, Yukon Mountie W.J.D. Dempster,

THE 1994 READERS' CHOICE SURVEY

for whom the Dempster Highway is named, and Adelaide Hoodless, educator and founder of the Women's Institutes. (Hoodless's three nominations suggest some mutual inspiration, for all came from one small town.)

After politics, the group that collected the most nominations was culture. Five novelists, all women, made the list: McClung, who wrote sixteen books, plus Margaret Atwood, Lucy Maude Montgomery ("she wrote *Anne*, need I say more?" — Ray F. Crawford, Parksville, British



Adelaide Hoodless

Columbia), Alice Munro, and Gabrielle Roy. Painters Arthur Lismer, Tom Thomson, and contemporary Cree artist Allen Sapp were proposed. Musicians nominated were Stompin' Tom Connors, Burton Cummings ("for putting Canadian rock and roll on the map" — David McBean, Toronto), Glenn Gould, and Gordon Lightfoot ("I hear Canada" — Ron Brown, Toronto). Historians Pierre Berton and Arthur Lower made the list, as did journalist J.W. Dafoe of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, Vancouver's great architect Arthur Erickson, pioneer anthropologist Diamond Jenness, media guru Marshall McLuhan, actress Mary Pickford ("America's Sweetheart was a Canadian" — Gary D. Palmer, Brandon, Manitoba), and humorists Peter McArthur and Stephen Leacock.

Science and medicine produced an impressive range of names, including the very topical 1994 Nobel lau-

reate, Bertram Brockhouse. He was nominated by fellow physicist J.E. Kennedy of Saskatoon, who also drew our attention to physicist John Stuart Foster and to astronomers Carlyle Beals, Alice V. Douglas, and Andrew McKellar. A fourth astronomer, Helen Hogg, was nominated by Kennedy's Saskatoon colleague W.O. Kupsch. Other scientists who have been nominated are Nobellist Gerhard Herzberg ("still an active lecturer at age 90," says Kupsch), continental drift theorist J. Tuzo Wilson, and geologist Charles Camshell.

Medical doctors are much admired. Readers proposed Montreal cardiologist and medical historian Maude Abbott, insulin discoverer Frederick Banting, surgeon and political activist Norman Bethune, heart surgeon and pacemaker pioneer Wilfred G. Bigelow, Vitamin E crusaders Evan and Wilfrid Shute, and Sir William Osler, a giant in medical education and practice, "at the height of his career the most famous and respected physician in the world" (Martin Reed, Winnipeg).

Bridging sports, medicine, and politics was Joe Sullivan, goalie for



Gerhard Herzberg

the 1928 Olympic hockey champions, later a distinguished doctor and senator. Thomas Kawalchuk of Winnipeg, who sent a short essay on his encounter with Bobby Hull, was one of several readers to nominate a hockey hero. "The Great One," Wayne Gretzky, earned three nominations, but others preferred the 1972 conqueror of Moscow, Paul Henderson, or old-time star Charlie Conacher. Baseball great Ferguson Jenkins completes the sports list.

The world of warfare inspired two readers to make a similar collective nomination: the Canadian veterans. Joe Martin of Toronto proposed "the Canadian soldier in World War I," and R.W. Frayling, of Kelowna, British Columbia, suggested "all Canadians who volunteered and served in the Canadian Armed Forces during the Second World War." Individual fighting men included flying ace Billy Bishop and nineteenth-century hero Sir Sam Steele, who squeaks into eligibility for this list for his service in the Boer War and the First World War. John Marshall of Orangeville, Ontario, named three generals from the Second World War: Guy Simonds, Howard Graham, and Chris Vokes. Other readers nominated military commanders Sir Arthur Currie from the first war and Andrew McNaughten from the second.

Business has its heroes, including two intriguing women from Manitoba. Arthur E. Gregg of Penticton, British Columbia, nomi-



Stompin' Tom Connors

nated Muriel Richardson of the Richardson financial empire. Ross Mallabar of Kenora, Ontario, suggested his grandmother, Sarah Mallabar, a Winnipeg widow who went out to support her family and founded Mallabar's, the theatrical costume empire still run by her heirs. Other business nominees were publisher, sportsman and philanthropist Max Bell, New Brunswick entrepreneur K.C. Irving, and tobacco magnate William C. Macdonald, who made his fortune in the nineteenth century, but gave much of it away in



William Osler

the twentieth. And management consultant Joe Martin of Toronto suggested Mackenzie King should be considered as the founder of management consulting in Canada if his political virtues were insufficient.

Clerics have been great Canadians too. Cardinal Léger, who gave up a diocese to serve the African missions, was nominated twice, and single votes came in for another Quebec cardinal, Jean-Marie-Rodrigue Villeneuve, and for educator and Quiet Revolution catalyst Georges-Henri Levesque. English-Canadian clerics cited for consideration were Douglas and Woodsworth, both preacher-politicians, and the controversial Baptist evangelist Thomas Todhunter Shields of Toronto.

There remain two intriguing nominations that resist classification. Ross Smyth of Montreal suggested Erroll Boyd, who was not part of the bankrobbing Boyd gang but the first Canadian to fly the Atlantic. And a



Paul-Émile Léger

reader in Toronto nominates all "the settlers — men and women — who settled the Canadian prairie in the first decade of this century."

Readers may note I have not made my own nomination. I appreciated the comment of Ron Brown of Toronto, who wrote, "Before responding to your quest for the 'great Canadian,' I agonized over just what a great Canadian should be." In 1992, one of our nominees, Pierre Berton, made a list of 125 great Canadians (it was published in the Canadian Airlines inflight maga-



A.G. McNaughton

zine for June 1992) — and he had so many names he offered a runners-up list of 125 more. Doubtless this list could also go on and on. But perhaps it should include the *Beaver* readers of the last seventy-five years. Judging by the knowledge,

wit, and judgment of their letters, they too deserve to be called "the greatest." ♦



Agnes Macphail



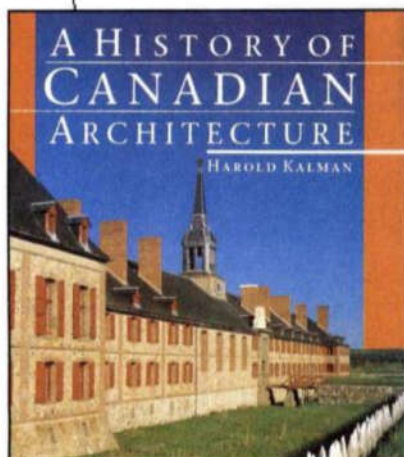
Ferguson Jenkins



L.M. Montgomery

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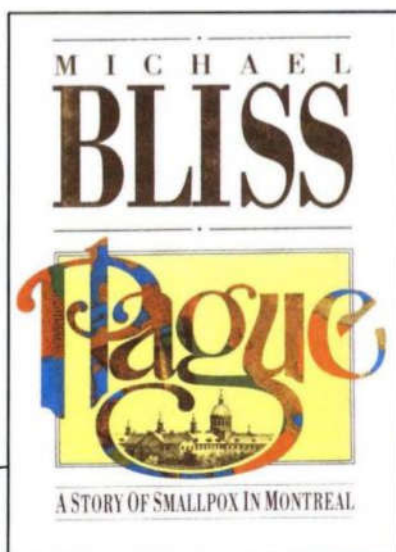
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An Arctic Odyssey

By Clifford Wilson

When the British explorers of the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries set out for the North American Arctic, their object was to find a navigable passage to the Orient that would be commercially useful. Had they discovered such a passage, it would have become one of the world's great arteries of trade. But as the centuries went by, and more and more ships and men were lost in the icy wastes of the Arctic archipelago, it gradually became evident that, even if the odd ship did succeed in finding her way north of the Canadian mainland between Atlantic and Pacific, the passage could never be of any use as a trade route.

One year the ice conditions might be favourable to a certain ship or a certain navigator; the next, the same ship or the same navigator might be frozen in for months at a time. This element of chance is strikingly shown by comparing the two voyages of the R.C.M.P. patrol vessel *St. Roch* through the Northwest Passage. In her voyage from west to east in 1940-42, ice conditions were such that she was held up for two winters. During the second winter, at Pasley Bay, she was stuck fast for eleven months before the ice shifted enough for her to break free. During the summer of 1944, on the other hand, her progress was made comparatively easy, as time and again leads opened up in the right place at the right time.

Sub-Inspector Larsen, her skipper, stresses this point — that just because good fortune helped him to make the Northwest Passage in one



A 'Beaver' Treasury

During its 75th Anniversary Year *The Beaver* will publish interesting and historic articles selected from past issues of the magazine. In this selection, published in *The Beaver* for March, 1945, Clifford Wilson, who was then the magazine's editor, describes the historic voyage of the R.C.M.P. vessel *St. Roch* through the Northwest Passage, an event of the previous year.

season last year [1944], that does not mean he can repeat the performance when ever called upon to do so. The *St. Roch*, like any other vessel, is still subject to the vagaries of arctic winds and currents, tides and weather, all of which add up to the determining factor for success or failure — ice conditions. The two danger points are in Melville Sound and around Point Barrow, and success or failure in future voyages will probably depend on the amount of ice met with in these two localities.

It is also to be borne in mind that the object of the *St. Roch*'s 1944 voyage was not to traverse the Northwest Passage as a feat of navigation. That was incidental to the business in hand — "to patrol through the Northwest Passage by way of Lancaster Sound, Barrow Strait, and Prince of Wales Strait, to the Beaufort Sea, in maintaining sovereignty over the Arctic Islands, and to ascertain if it would be possible to take in supplies from the west to any new detachments of the Force which may be established in the future on islands along the route."

The captain of the *St. Roch* was also required "to erect notices and secure information on the topographical description of the land areas seen, tidal ranges, water depths, direction of ice movements and currents, fog possibility, etc." And in addition, the R.C.M.P. had in mind the possibility of reopening the posts of Craig Harbour and Dundas Harbour in 1945, and establishing a new detachment at Winter Harbour on Melville Island.

For the 1944 voyage, the stout little eighty-ton vessel was refitted

in the East. Her 150 h.p. diesel engine was replaced by one twice as powerful, several cabins were built in, and the galley and mess room rebuilt.

Her skipper for the voyage was Staff-Sergeant (now Sub-Inspector) Henry Larsen, who had commanded her ever since she was launched at Vancouver in 1928. Two other veterans of the 1940-42 voyage accompanied him — Corporal P.G. Hunt, the clerk, and Corporal G.W. Peters, who had been second engineer on the west-east voyage and was chief engineer on this one. Ole Andreasen, the mate [see picture, page 74], had spent about thirty years in the Western Arctic, operating small trading vessels up and down the coast, and had also made the famous ice trip with Stefansson. Rudolph Johnsen, second engineer, and nearly seventy years of age, was another Western Arctic old-timer, having for many years operated posts up there for the Hudson's Bay Company, and been engineer of the *Fort McPherson* and *Nigglik*. Of the rest of the crew of ten, none had ever seen the Arctic, and only F. Matthews and J.S. McKenzie, both Newfoundland seamen, had ever been to sea.

The *St. Roch* left Halifax on 22 July but on account of engine trouble had to put in to Sydney. On 26 July she sailed again, but further trouble necessitated a stop at Curling, in the Bay of Islands, Newfoundland. By 2 August she was off Cape Chidley, the northernmost tip of Labrador, and heading north for Baffin Island. Large fields of ice in Davis Strait forced her to turn eastward towards Greenland, but by 6 August she was headed back towards the coast of Baffin Island.

It was about this time that the gyro compass, which is designed to be unaffected by the nearness of the North Magnetic Pole on Boothia Peninsula, went wrong. From then on, Larsen had to set his course "by guess and by God." The magnetic compass was of some help, but the experience of nearly twenty years of Arctic navigation, coupled with the assistance of those members of his crew who had had experience up there, enabled him to find his way through storm and fog and snow and ice till he emerged from the historic passage.

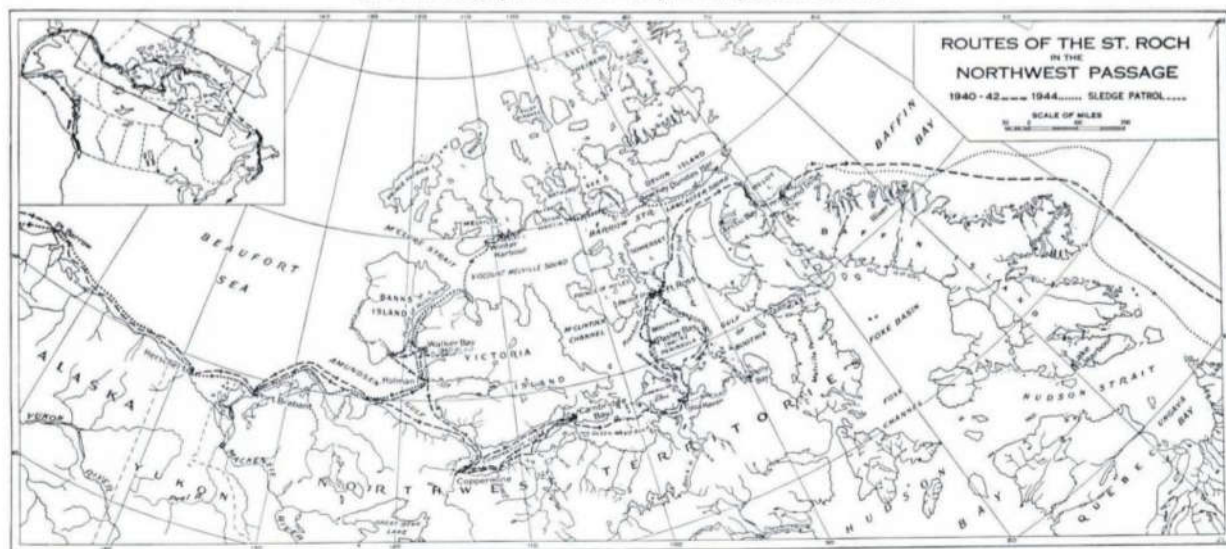
On 9 August off the entrance to Pond Inlet, the *St. Roch* was stopped dead by the ice and fog. Grapnels

were thrown out to a huge floe, and there she lay for three days, until she was able to approach the settlement. Here, at the police post, she unloaded some supplies and picked up a native family, who cheerfully camped aboard in their tent — with their seventeen dogs and long dogsled — for five weeks. This apparent imposition was really a form of insurance as well as an act of kindness; for had the *St. Roch* been forced to winter in the Arctic — as was wholly possible, if not probable — the Eskimo hunter with his deft-fingered women and his dogs and komatik would have proved extremely useful.

On 17 August with this motley passenger list, the little vessel sailed out of Pond Inlet, north through Navy Board Inlet, and at its northern exit entered Lancaster Sound — the beginning of the Northwest Passage from east to west, through the northern route.

She headed first across the sound to the abandoned R.C.M.P. post of Dundas Harbour on Devon Island. Then coasting westward along the southern shore she sailed up Stratton Inlet, where lie the remains of a prehistoric Eskimo village. There the first cairn of the voyage was built,

"Canadian Geographical Journal" map, 1944, by J. Lewis Robinson.



and records deposited inside. There, too, the first snow of the season sprinkled the bare brown rocks and the tundra.

Westward again, the *St. Roch* ran into some more snow flurries, which cut visibility to almost zero. Next day, 20 August, she anchored in Erebus Bay, beneath the great frowning headland of Beechey Island. Parry had come here on his first voyage in 1819 and had named the island after one of his lieutenants. Franklin, on his last expedition, had wintered here in 1845-6. Sir John Ross had been here in 1850 in the *Felix* looking for Franklin, and had left his private twelve-ton yacht *Mary* hauled out on the beach, fully

fitted out as a vessel of refuge for the crews of ships which might be wrecked within reach of the bay. Captain Pullen of the depot ship *North Star* had come in 1852 and had left a huge cache which he dignified by the name of Northumberland House. McClintock had been there in 1858, and had set up Lady Franklin's tablet. In 1902 had come Otto Sverdrup; in 1903, Amundsen; A.P. Low, the brilliant Canadian geologist, in 1904; and Capt. Bernier, famed Canadian explorer, in 1906-08. Then, as late as 1923, the square-rigged Canadian Government steamer *Arctic* had anchored off the beach.

Larsen and his men found the ruins of Pullen's cache behind stone walls. All it contained was some empty barrels and a few lumps of coal. Of the *Mary* nothing remained but pieces of her stem and planking, and her mast stuck upright in the sand. Part of her stem was taken aboard as an interesting relic of ship construction nearly a century old.

On 22 August, the *St. Roch* sailed away from that historic spot and the same day met drifting floes — the first they had seen for several days — off Cornwallis Island. Following closely along the south coast inside a line of islands, they saw ice stretching in a solid, gleaming mass to the south.

To the north, however, clear water led along the coast as far as Cape Airy. From there, turning west, they followed leads to Bathurst Island. On 23 August they reached Cape Cockburn, on the south coast of Bathurst Island, but ice stopped further progress, and helpless in its grip, they were carried back the way they had come for twenty miles. Not until the following day did they reach Cape Cockburn again. A party went ashore, but found no record of the cairn left by Bernier. In their turn they left a cairn, and inside, a record of the voyage to that point. Climbing to the top of a high cape, they looked out over the enormous

expanse of Viscount Melville Sound, hoping to see a lead opening up. But as far as the horizon, they could see nothing but ice.

After consultation, Larsen decided to try a route north of little Byam Martin Island. Several times they were caught in the ice and forced to lose the ground they had gained. But the next day they made the north coast of the island, and Corporal Hunt with a party went ashore and left the usual record inside a cairn. Looking about them, they saw fresh caribou tracks, but there was no time — or need — to pursue the matter further. More signs of wild life were seen the next day, when, following a lead to the west, they reached the coast of Melville Island and saw twelve musk oxen grazing on the tundra. On this coast they left two more cairns, at Griffith and Palmer Points.

On the 27th a great find was made. In clear weather they approached Dealey Island, and from afar they could see a large cairn topped by three barrels on a pole. It marked the great cache left by Captain Kellett of H.M.S. *Resolute* in 1852-53. Going ashore, the *St. Roch* men explored its remains. It consisted mainly of barrels and iron cans, filled with all sorts of food and clothing. In the cans were hard tack, canned meats, vegetables and soups, the latter in quart canisters marked "Ox cheek soup prepared by John Henry Gamble, 137 Leadenhall St., London, opposite East India House." In the barrels were peas, beans, chocolate, flour, and tea — but none in a condition to tempt the appetite. The skeletons of two bears nearby suggested what might happen to anyone curious enough to try. Other barrels contained clothing and sea boots, one pair of which was still in good condition. Evidence of a more recent visit was found in the form of two broken rifles and a case of ammunition left by Bernier.

Westward from Dealey Island lay Winter Harbour, named by Parry

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who spent the winters of 1819-21 there. On the 29th, the *St. Roch* anchored in the harbour and going ashore, the men found a storehouse built by Bernier in 1910, still in reasonably good condition. From one of the rafters they found a bottle hanging, and opening it they found — doubtless with mixed feelings — a piece of paper bearing a record of a visit made in 1929 by one of the greatest of modern Arctic travellers, the late Inspector A.H. Joy, R.C.M.P.

Before leaving the next day, they deposited a record of their own at Parry Rock. Fortune favoured them, and the ice opened up to permit a run of thirty miles to the south. Then the mist descended, and they had to throw out grapnels to a large floe and wait. Meanwhile they took advantage of the situation and filled up their fresh water tanks from pools lying in the hollows of the floe.

On the last day of August they met ice heavier than any they had experienced that season. It was driving in from the west through McClure Strait. Fog came down intermittently and lowered visibility to zero, and at such times the little *St. Roch* could only drift helplessly as the great growlers swirled her about, pounding and grinding against her sides.

For the next two days they alternately drifted and steamed between enormous floes which appeared to have broken up or split only a few days before. But late in the afternoon of the third day, land loomed ahead through the lifting fog. It was the entrance to Prince of Wales Strait, between Banks and Victoria Islands — but which side of the entrance, no one knew. If it were the northern side, passing to the north of it would lead them away from their course and into McClure Strait. If it were the south side, passing to the south could only lead them into Collinson Inlet, which would soon be recognizable. Larsen decided to try the latter course — and soon

found that he was in the inlet. The head of this inlet has never been explored, but as it was choked with ice, with more coming in abaft, the skipper put her about and headed for Prince of Wales Strait.

He was now coming to what might prove the most difficult part of the voyage. Since leaving Navy Board Inlet, at the entrance to the Northwest Passage, the sea lanes he

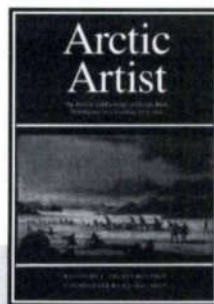
had threaded, between the islands of the archipelago, had been reasonably wide. Now, however, there lay ahead of him a strait one hundred and seventy-five miles long, with the land masses converging in some places to within ten miles of each other.

But luck was with him. The long narrow passage stretched away under the sunlight between its rocky

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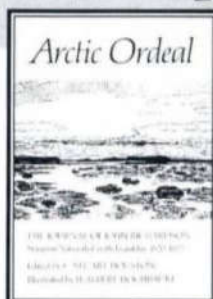
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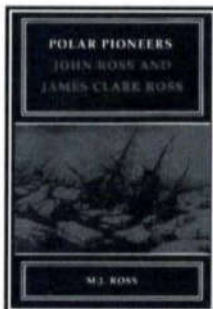
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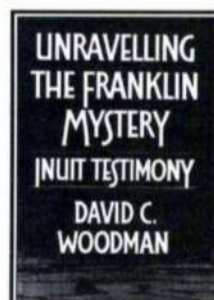
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Home at last, the "St. Roch" ties up in Vancouver after her epic voyage.

shores, almost completely free of ice. Steadily the *St. Roch* ploughed southward, and before nightfall she was through the strait and out into the wide expanse of Amundsen Gulf. She had made the Northwest Passage in eighteen days!

Larsen radioed the good news to R.C.M.P. headquarters at Ottawa, and received in reply congratulations, and instructions to try for Herschel Island and Vancouver. At Holman Island, the next day, the *St. Roch* men called at the H.B.C. post and gave the news of their success to the astounded post manager, Leonard Coates.

On 5 September they set off for Herschel Island; but by reason of the ice in Amundsen Gulf, had to follow the coastline of the mainland westwards from Cape Parry. Near Tuktuk (Port Brabant) their progress was arrested by tightly packed ice.

They tied up to a grounded floe ten miles north of Toker Point, and remained thus for twenty hours while more and more ice pressed down from the northwest. But storm-clouds were gathering, and rather than be caught in such an exposed condition, Larsen decided to head in for Tuktuk. There, however, trouble of another sort lay in wait for them. It was dark when they reached Tuktuk harbour, and trying to find anchorage there, they ran aground. Hardly had they freed themselves, when a gale of hurricane force swept down upon them from out of the north, and for two days they had to ride out the storm at anchor. So great were the waves that some of the Company buildings were washed away.

When at last the gale abated, Mackenzie Bay between Tuktuk and Herschel Island was jam-packed

with ice. For a week the *St. Roch* waited for a lead to open up. Then on 17 September she made a try for Herschel Island, and by steaming between the pack and the shore in fairly shallow water, through the heaviest ice of the voyage, reached it the next day.

Vancouver was still a long way off, the season was late, and many leagues of ice-filled seas beset her course. To all appearances, the *St. Roch* would have to winter at Herschel Island. The Eskimo family, with food and supplies, were put ashore, and the crew prepared to meet the winter.

On the 21st, however, Larsen radioed Ottawa that he was going to make a dash for it. Three days later he was past the point of extreme danger — Point Barrow — and heading southwest for Bering Strait. At Wainwright Inlet they saw the

last of the ice, and from then on — save for a two-day storm in early October — it was all plain sailing.

At last, at seven o'clock on the evening of 16 October the little white ship, her hull scarred and pitted from weeks of battle with the Arctic ice, crept through the narrows and under the great Lion's Gate bridge into her home port — Vancouver. And proudly fluttering across her bridge was a large white pennant, proclaiming her as the conqueror, in a single season, of the fabled Northwest Passage, and the first over the northern route. ♦

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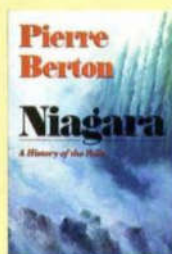
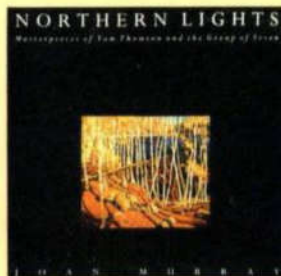
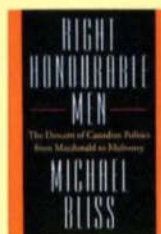
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